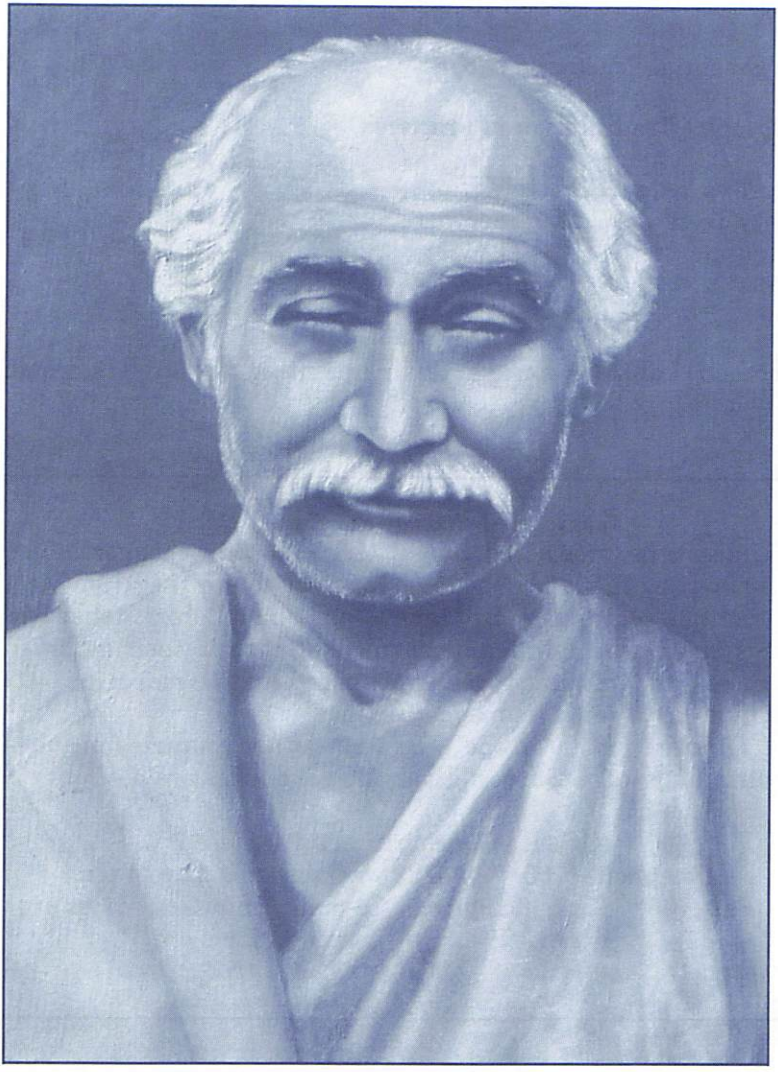
RADIANCE

A Quarterly Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

January – March 2002



Disregarding externals, fixing the gaze inward between the eyebrows, harmonizing the breath [prana]; the devotee established in knowledge, whose highest aim is liberation of consciousness, whose senses, mind, and intellect are controlled, from whom desire, fear, and anger have departed, is forever free. – *Bhagavad Gita 5:27,28*

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Front cover: Lahiri Mahasaya. From a painting by Margo Bergman.

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Unless otherwise noted, the articles in *Radiance* magazine are written by Roy Eugene Davis for initiates in the kriya yoga tradition represented by Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda, and their qualified successors. Initiated CSA members receive this magazine free. Other kriya initiates may subscribe.

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The Direct Way to Be Self-Realized

Fluctuations in individualized awareness can be restrained, restricted, and removed [or transcended] by meditation practice and dispassionate nonattachment.

Of these two [ways], concentration on a object is meditation.

Meditation becomes steady by persistent, devoted endeavor.

Dispassionate nonattachment is accomplished by renouncing cravings and instinctual urges.

The highest renunciation results from Self-realization that enables one to disregard and transcend the actions of cosmic forces regulated by the constituent attributes of nature.

– *Patanjali's yoga-sutras 1:12–16*

Wavelike movements (vrittis) in our awareness persist so long as subliminal impulses (vasanas) keep them in motion. When the driving forces of subliminal impulses cease, and we remain alert, our awareness is clear.

The two ways of clarifying awareness are 1) concentration on a chosen object; 2) dispassionate (unemotional) detachment which enables us to disregard conditions which might distract our attention. Detachment that prevails when we are established in Self-awareness is superior because it does not require effort. When Self-realization is steady, neither the subliminal influences nor the influences of cosmic forces can disturb our soul peace.

Forces in nature (and in the body and mind) are regulated by three constituent attributes (sattwa, rajas, tamas). Yogis are advised to overcome tamasic (heavy, dulling) influences by engaging in constructive action. When not meditating, actions should be decisive and purposeful. When meditating, prayer or the practice of an effective meditation technique can be used. When tamasic influences have been overcome by rajasic actions, sattwic (illuminating, truth revealing) influences can be allowed

to prevail. Eventually, the influences of sattwa guna are transcended. While we are established in Self-realization, we are impervious to all external conditions.

If, after meditation, we return to ordinary (conditioned) states of awareness, troublesome influences can be weakened and transcended by choosing to be detached from them. To do this, it is helpful to discriminate between ourselves as beings of pure consciousness and ordinary states of awareness and external conditions. We can then think, feel, and act freely rather than be influenced by that which we are not.

The Importance of Devotion to the Spiritual Path, Demonstrated by Constructive Actions

Devotion is ardent attraction, loyalty, or faithfulness to the object of our devotion. When we are devoted to a just cause, our attention and actions are involved with it. When we are devoted to spiritual practice, our participation is fervent and persistent. When we are devoted to the ideal of Self- and God-realization, the quick actualization of that ideal is of primary importance. How devoted to the spiritual path are we? It is easy to know the answer:

What do we think about most of the time?

To what ends are our actions habitually directed?

How do we use our knowledge, time, and resources?

How attentive are we to wholesome living; appropriate, ideal conduct; study of metaphysical principles; and regular practice of superconscious meditation?

Are we intent on being fully Self- and God-realized in this incarnation? Do our thoughts and actions always confirm our intention?

It is easy to talk about discipleship (dedication to learning and to quickly actualizing our innate potential); what is more important is to live in the right way so that spiritual growth can naturally occur.

Complete kriya yoga practice removes all physical and mental obstacles to God-realization (*yoga-sutras* 2:2). To be reminded of how to live and how to practice meditation, read chapter two of the *yoga-sutras* to determine whether or not your practice of kriya yoga is complete. Our constructive actions (kriyas) do not cause spiritual growth to occur; they allow it to happen as conditions which restrict it are removed.

- Right living nurtures physical and psychological health and creates harmonious environmental circumstances.
- Right meditation practice clarifies our awareness.
- Right kriya pranayama practice refines the nervous system and transforms the brain so that awareness can flow freely.

In his book, *The Holy Science*, Sri Yukteswar wrote that when eight obstacles that restrict natural spiritual growth are removed, because of the forgiving and generous attitude that results, "one becomes able to practice meditation, pranayama, and internalization of attention; and to enjoy a natural life [by fulfilling all desires and getting rid of them]." He defines the eight obstacles as hatred, shame, fear, grief, condemnation (faultfinding), race prejudice, pride of ancestry, and smugness (a small-minded sense of respectability). All of these restrictive conditions are characteristics of egotism: self-centeredness and an inflated sense of self-importance.

Sri Yukteswar explained that adeptship (Self-mastery) can be achieved by purification of the three bodies through which one expresses and by the guru's grace. The physical body can be purified by natural means; the astral body is purified by voluntary acts of devotional self-control such as cultivation of patience and dispassion that calms and pacifies subliminal influences and maintains emotional balance; the causal body is purified by the influence of mantra.

Some natural means to be used to purify the physical body are wholesome living, avoidance of contamination by harmful

bacteria or by environmental pollution, internal and external cleanliness, and balanced routines of activity and rest.

Mental and emotional calmness is essential if thinking is to be rational and awareness is to be clarified. Although at the core of our being we are always pure and knowledgeable, when our emotions are unsettled, the mind confused, and our awareness modified or fragmented, our Self-awareness is obscured. Meditate every day to the stage of superconscious peace and endeavor to maintain that peace when engaged in ordinary activities.

While verbal and mental recitation of a mantra is of value, of superior value is listening to the Om vibration. Before it is heard, various sound frequencies emanating from the chakras in the spine and head may be heard. When attention and awareness are absorbed in the inner sound, emotions and thoughts are more easily ignored and awareness is clarified.

After using the preliminary meditation techniques such as kriya pranayama and the supplemental practices, listening to Om is the final practice.

Grace (Latin *gratia*, good will < *gratus*, pleasing) is the support provided by infinite Consciousness of which we are individualized units. Grace can also flow through the guru and the lineage of gurus—as we are silently influenced by their enlightened consciousness, are receptive to the spiritual force that streams through them, and learn to effectively use the knowledge they have freely given.

It is clear that the direct way to be Self-realized is to aspire to it and to appropriately live so that it can be experienced.

Awakening to liberation, the ultimate aim of life is accomplished.

– *Swami Sri Yukteswar*

Commentary

The Essential Practices of Yoga

essential inherent or characteristic, indispensable, necessary.
practice Latin *practicus*, practical. Pertaining to or acquired by application rather than theory, speculation, or ideals.
yoga 1. Sanskrit *yug*, to join or unify. 2. Awareness of oneness with the Infinite field of Consciousness. 3. The means by which Self- and God-realization can be experienced.

Exactly when, in the course of human history, knowledge of yoga emerged in the minds of spiritually inclined individuals and began to be applied, is not known. We do know that these methods have been practiced for at least five thousand years.

The earliest reference to endeavor to control the mind and senses is in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (7th century B.C.E.), although the information was transmitted orally prior to that time. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (3rd or 4th century B.C.E.), it is stated that yoga practices had been taught by a lineage of teachers for thousands of years and that this knowledge emerges when people are receptive to it and submerges when receptivity to it wanes:

Thus received by successive transmission, the royal sages knew this yoga, until, after a long lapse of time, it was lost to the world. 4:2

Patanjali (circa 200 C.E.), who described in his *yoga-sutras* how superconscious states can be experienced, meditation can be effectively practiced, and liberation of consciousness can be realized, also acknowledged the antiquity of yoga:

Now [at this auspicious time], in accord with an established tradition, instruction in yoga begins. 1:1

A practitioner of yoga should know the ultimate purpose of spiritual endeavor to be transcendence of ordinary states of con-

sciousness and the often superficial or self-centered values associated with them. In our current era, of millions of people who practice some form of yoga, only a few are devoted to the ideal of Self- and God-realization; most are interested only in obtaining physical and psychological benefits and improving their egocentric endeavors and relationships.

The thinking and endeavors of one who aspires to succeed as a practitioner of yoga must go to the core of the matter. An intellectual grasp of philosophical principles must first be acquired and procedures learned and applied. It is most helpful to have an accomplished teacher (guru) with highly developed powers of discernment, practical experience, and proficiency, if not complete mastery, in eliciting samadhi states. A sincere truth seeker must be a disciple. If the capacity to learn and to practice what is learned is absent, involvement with yogic processes is useless.

Yoga Theory and Essential Practices

Four fundamental concepts need to be examined.

1. *The processes that produce and maintain the cosmos.* With this knowledge, illusions cease and the universe is viewed as an interaction of cosmic forces—real because it exists, yet is not as it appears to be to one who is not informed.
2. *The laws of cause and effect (karma)* that keep spiritually unawake souls involved with matter and its processes.
3. *The Absolute Reality.* The pure field of Consciousness from which everything originates and which is to be realized. It is "absolute" because devoid of attributes. Its first projected aspect (the Godhead or Oversoul) has attributes (gunas).
4. *The means by which the Absolute Reality can be realized*—yoga practiced in accord with the precise definition of the word: samadhi. All other appropriate yoga practices serve to make the body, mind, and awareness more receptive to transcendent realizations prior to their occurrence and may support those states

during early stages of emergence.

The Problem of Suffering, Its Cause and Solution

The primary cause of suffering is lack of Self-knowledge which results from inaccurate or incomplete perception of the essence of being. The erroneous belief that a physical body, or a personality, is one's real being predisposes a person to be preoccupied with the body or personality, or both. When the body is healthy, there can be psychological suffering. And when both physical and psychological well-being are experienced, fear of change, disability, or death can disturb the mind and emotions. Even when circumstances are ideal, their termination is an eventual certainty which must be acknowledged. What is born, dies. What begins, ends. Nothing in the objective realm is permanent. Confronting facts should not cause us to be pessimistic. To the contrary, knowing that transitory conditions can be "seen through" and transcended should inspire optimism.

The True Self to Be Realized

The essence of our being, the true Self, was individualized because of interactions between the Godhead and the field of primordial nature. At the core, the Self is always pure, serene, and knowledgeable in regard to what it is and its relationship to infinite Consciousness. It is only at the surface of awareness that confusion can exist. An individualized unit of Consciousness identified with matter and mind is referred to as a soul. When the soul becomes overly involved with matter and its powers of discernment are blurred, it mistakenly feels itself to be separate from the one field of Consciousness. The mistaken sense of "I-ness" is referred to as the ego. When the ego is purified, or transcended, awareness of one's true nature in relationship to the wholeness of life is apprehended. The ego should not be confused with *egotism*—an inflated sense of self-importance.

Samadhi and Liberation of Consciousness

The four categories of awareness about which to know are 1) the waking state; 2) the dream state; 3) unconsciousness, as when deep sleep prevails; 4) superconsciousness (including samadhi, of which there can be several stages).

Samadhi differs from hypnotic states. During an episode of superconscious samadhi, awareness may be partially or fully identified with an object of attention or be unsupported and free-flowing. Hypnosis is the partial or complete blocking of a flow of attention.

Four stages of samadhi supported by objects of attention:

1. *Comparative.* In relationship to memories and ideas. The meditator is inclined to compare the experience with prior states of consciousness or with what others have said about superconscious states.
2. *Noncomparitive.* Without memories or ideas. Attention and awareness is so fully absorbed in the object of meditative contemplation that all sense of "otherness" is absent.
3. *Reflective.* Superconscious examination of subtle essences or aspects of the object being contemplated, with feelings or emotions present. One may inquire into subtle aspects of the mind, intellect, ego, processes of cosmic manifestation, or supreme Consciousness with feeling-response to insights or perceptions one is having. The sense that "I, as the Self, am looking at this" remains.
4. *Super-reflective.* Spontaneously Self-revealed knowledge of subtle essences or aspects formerly examined without any feeling-influence or sense of difference. At this stage, awareness along with knowledge is "Self-shining."

Beyond these stages is existence-being realization without the support of an object of attention. When Self-realization is complete, it permanently persists whether one is meditating or

is engaged in normal activities. This final stage is constant, spontaneous Self- and God-realization which progresses to liberation of consciousness.

The consciousness of one who is fully liberated is devoid of delusions (false ideas and opinions) and illusions (the result of misperceptions) and is not modified by objective or subjective influences. At the stage of qualified liberation, although one may be able to experience refined superconscious states at will, a partial or complete return to an ordinary, conditioned state may occur because of subliminal influences that are still present, the influences of cosmic forces regulated by the gunas, or the force of habit.

The various systems of yoga evolved because the capacities of practitioners vary. One person may be inclined toward and benefit from a devotional approach (bhakti yoga). Others may be inclined to cultivate powers of discriminative intelligence (jnana yoga), practice hatha yoga, perform duties without mental or emotional attachment to them (karma yoga), or meditate with alert, inspired intention (raja yoga). A balanced, integrated approach is best, in accord with our psychological temperament, mental capacity, physical condition, personal circumstances, and innate urge to have awareness restored to wholeness. If one has a wise teacher, it is easier to choose the most useful course of action.

Meditation results in divine revelation. Then out of the reality of one's being arises the perception and realization of the pure Self. Self-realization is conscious perception of our absolute identity with God, the Self-revelation of our true nature by the illumination of our pure consciousness. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

Dialogue

Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Themes are provided by readers and other kriya initiates. Participate in these dialogues by sending me your questions or comments.

The "self-awareness" of God is a new concept for me. I tend to think of God as I learned in childhood, as a superhuman being. Share some ideas about how I can adjust my point of view and thoughts about God.

Memories acquired during childhood years are often firmly impressed in the subconscious level of the mind and may be strongly influential. If they cause conflict, they need to be replaced with knowledge. As understanding of God improves, erroneous memories will not be as influential as they once were. Eventually, your clear insight will prevail. Childhood memories are not the only ones which modify the mind and awareness; erroneous ideas accumulated through the years can also be troublesome. Cultivate and use your powers of discriminative intelligence until your Self- and God-realization provides intuitive knowledge of what is true.

When I meditate, I can easily experience mental calmness and a serene state of awareness without a meditation technique. Should I use techniques anyway?

If you are able to easily experience a superconscious state, use kriya pranayama at the beginning of your session, or later if you sit for a long time. This pranayama refines the nervous system and brain and will allow your awareness to more easily express through the body. Use it or any other technique to improve your concentration whenever needed.

When I practice kriya pranayama, although it does help me to concentrate better, I am not able to feel an obvious flow of current through the spine.

Experiment until you can feel a suction effect in the throat behind and below the root of the tongue as you inhale. Use this to pull the current up through the spine; let the current descend when you exhale. When doing this, feel the sensation in the spine. Even if an obvious flow of current is not felt, this kind of breathing will somewhat calm the mind and help you concentrate more effectively. Before meditating, practice one or two easy hatha yoga asanas that stretch and twist the spine. If you can perform mahamudra, this will be helpful. Also, cultivate devotion to God. Such devotion awakens dormant soul force in the lower chakras.

Among various pranayamas, which are most useful for kriya initiates to practice?

Pran (life force) *ayama* (not restrained, free flowing) can occur as a result of regulating our breathing rhythm. The most useful basic pranayama is alternate nostril breathing that neutralizes flows of life force through the left and right channels, resulting in orderly interactions between the left and right hemispheres of the brain, physical relaxation, and mental calmness. Kriya pranayama, during which life force is directed through the chakras is the most important practice because, when used effectively, it immediately brings life forces from the lower chakras to the spiritual eye (related to the front lobes of the brain) and higher brain, calms the mind, internalizes attention, and improves concentration.

What is the major obstacle to spiritual growth for most people and what can be done to overcome it?

For one whose awareness is ordinary, a major obstacle is attachment to 1) conditioned ways of thinking and perceiving;

2) habitual behaviors; and 3) dependent relationships.

Ordinary states of awareness are modified and blurred by tamasic influences, erroneous ideas, and illusions. Awareness can be clarified by cultivating intellectual powers and practice of superconscious meditation.

Ordinary mental states may be influenced by subconscious conditionings, subliminal impulses, and irrational thinking. The mind can be purified and thinking can be rational if one is willing to be Self-determined (to live from soul awareness and think from that level of awareness).

Personal behaviors and lifestyle routines are often impelled by habit rather than wisely chosen. While they may not be harmful, they may not be life-enhancing. Personal behaviors can be modified and meaningful lifestyle routines can be adopted to conform to our highest ideals if our aspiration is fervent.

Dependent relationships may result from desire to satisfy emotional or physical needs, a desire for security, or arrested emotional growth.

How can our philosophy be related in a more specific way to world conditions: political conflicts, wars, and other events that are constantly in the news—some of which have an effect on our lives?

Understanding that these situations are the result of confusion in regard to the real purpose of our lives provides insight. People who are not spiritually aware are inclined to be self-centered and primarily concerned with personality issues and their physical survival and well-being. They are not yet aware of the wholeness of life and of the practical usefulness of compassionate cooperation for the highest good of everyone and the planet. According to our understanding of the theory of cosmic cycles, we are currently in an ascending era during which more people are being spiritually aroused. From now on, world conditions will more rapidly improve.

Recommend a sitting posture I can use to sit comfortably for an extended duration of time. Cross-legged postures, or sitting on a small bench in a kneeling position, is not comfortable for more than 30 to 45 minutes.

If you enjoy sitting in a cross-legged posture, or kneeling, do this only for short meditation sessions. For longer sessions, sit upright in a comfortable chair.

Many psychological issues have been emerging recently which I feel need to be confronted and resolved. Is daily meditation sufficient to handle these matters? Are there methods to use to resolve or transcend them? Also, how can one know when personal counseling might be helpful.

Meditation practice will, in time, purify the mind; however, it can be useful to examine the various thoughts, memories, and feelings that arise and resolve any conflicts. Do this with calm objectivity, remembering that you are a spiritual being observing the contents of your mind and your feelings. If you think that personal counseling would be helpful, arrange to have it. To avoid self-centered preoccupation with subjective states, balance your sessions of constructive self-analysis with purposeful living. Replace troublesome thoughts and feelings with life-enhancing thoughts, feelings, and actions.

I recently read an article on tantra yoga in which the author described a ritual in which both participants eat meat, drink alcohol, and engage in sexual intercourse. What about this?

Tantrism is the philosophy described in an extensive body of literature known as tantras; their origins are not yet fully known. The word *tantra* is derived from the Sanskrit root *tan*, to extend or expand. The literature expounds on a wide range of subjects: cosmology, esoteric rituals, and ways to awaken and work with kundalini energies. In regard to the latter subject, the aim is to

ultimately unite kundalini energies (shakti) with the crown chakra or pure consciousness (referred to as shiva). In our current era, some individuals interested in tantra yoga practices are fascinated with the so-called "left-hand" path of using the senses in a way that will result in eventual transcendence of them.

In his private diary notes, Lahiri Mahasaya wrote that, for a yogi, the "right-hand" path is to be taken. He explained the esoteric meanings of the substances and practices. The eating of meat is the practice of kechari mudra: the gross form of which is accomplished by pulling the tongue toward the throat during kriya pranayama. The advanced form is experienced when the meditator's awareness is "free in space." Drinking wine is the absorption of *nectar* (regenerative influences) which is said to emanate from the crown chakra and brain during meditative superconscious states. The esoteric meaning of male-female interaction and its consummation is the "mystical union" that results when kundalini energies, viewed as feminine in character, are united with the crown chakra, viewed as having a male or positive polarity. Thus, the process occurs entirely within the meditator's body.

I have been reading metaphysical literature for a few years and practice meditation now and then. Would it be helpful to be initiated?

Rather than think of perhaps being helped as a result of being initiated, decide whether or not you sincerely want to be a disciple (learner and practitioner) who is fully committed to complete kriya yoga practice.

Addendum

Reflections on Fifty-Two Years of Discipleship and Fifty Years of Ministry Service

I met Paramahansa Yogananda early in the evening on December 23, 1949, was accepted for training on Christmas day, formally accepted as a disciple a few weeks later, and ordained to represent this kriya yoga tradition in the autumn of 1951. Since meeting my guru, I have devotedly adhered to this enlightenment path.

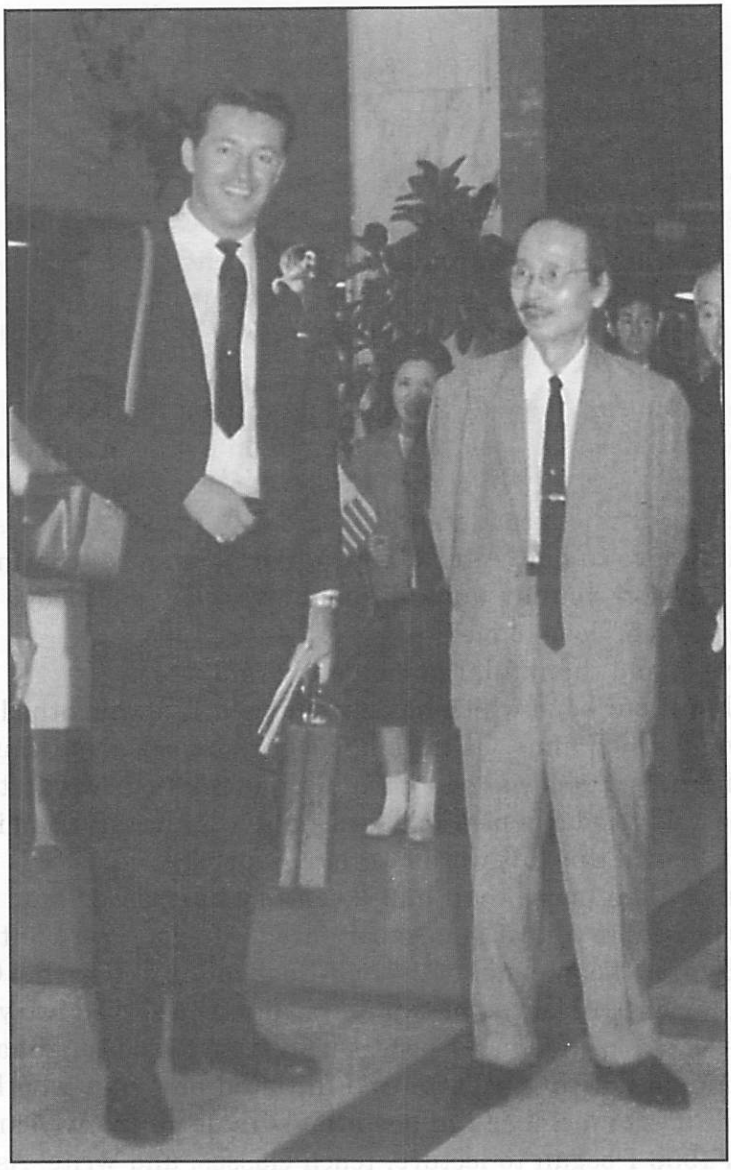
When Paramahansaji accepted me as a disciple, he asked me to kneel before him, then put his hand on my head and quietly spoke these words: "When Sri Yukteswar accepted me, he said, 'I promise you my unconditional love. Can you pledge that same [kind of] love to me?' After a pause, Paramahansaji continued, "Roy, I pledge you my unconditional love. Can you pledge that same [kind of] love to me?"

Awed, and thankful, I immediately said, "Yes."

That is our bond which has not changed. A few months later, at Twentynine Palms, California, my guru informed me that our meeting was a renewal of a guru-disciple relationship that had been established in a previous incarnation. Although I had intuitively known this, his words were reassuring.

Since then, more than half a century has passed, and fifty years of ministry have been experienced. After my guru left this world, I was the minister of the Self-Realization Fellowship Center in Phoenix, Arizona, for two years, and then served two years in the U.S. Army Medical Corps. During that time I taught a few individuals how to meditate and initiated one man who later became a CSA member and has been with us for many years.

In 1956 I began to lecture, teach classes, and write. As the years unfolded, I presented programs in cities small and large in many regions of the United States. In 1964 I visited Japan for



With Dr. Masaharu Taniguchi, Tokyo, Japan, 1964.

the first time, sponsored by Dr. Masaharu Taniguchi, who was the spiritual head of the two million-member Seicho-In-No (Home of Infinite Life, Truth, and Abundance) movement in that country. In the early 1970s, I moved to Lakemont and founded our current work, which continues to flourish. During the past three decades, our ministry-influence has been extended all over the world: with exceptional impact in West Africa, Europe, and now India.

When I reflect on what has occurred through the years, as a result of my endeavors and God's grace, I clearly remember the words that Paramahansaji spoke to me late one night in early January, 1950. I happened to be in the basement of the SRF headquarters building when he walked into the hallway, accompanied by Faye Wright (now Daya Mata), her sister, and another woman. After speaking with me for a minute or two, he went to the elevator to go upstairs. After the elevator door closed, he opened it again, looked deeply into my eyes, and said, "You have a wonderful future, Roy." Still looking into my eyes, as the door closed he gently said, "Good night, Roy." I remained alone there for several minutes before going to my room to meditate.

Whenever I was with him, I felt a transmission of his vital force into my body and mind. When I learned to attune my mind and awareness with his, as he encouraged me to do, when we were separated by miles, the flow of spiritual force from him and the lineage of gurus through him, was always felt—and still is.

In regard to teaching kriya yoga, Paramahansaji spoke of the need for both quantity and quality: informing as many people as possible about the teachings while working with sincere devotees who are committed to discipleship. The CSA ministry is like this: while we reach out to encourage people to live a God-centered life regardless of their level of interest, our major emphasis is to teach kriya yoga practices to persons who are receptive to them and offer initiation.

Through the years, hundreds of thousands of people have attended my lectures and classes and read my books, and at

Left to right: Bill Franklin, Leode Franklin, and Arley Gaines with me at Los Gatos, California, 1980.

least ten thousand have been initiated. Of those whom I have initiated, fewer than one thousand have continued to practice or remain in contact. Even so, I continue to serve because it is my spiritual duty. And, as my guru said in regard to his work, at least some spiritual seeds have been planted in the soil of the minds of those who were served—which may later sprout and grow, and be of benefit to them.

Our ministry service is karma yoga, performed selflessly. I would like to see more kriya initiates remain committed to this path and be strongly supportive of it. Our way, however, is not coercive: we do not endeavor to persuade anyone to do anything they are not inspired to do. We invite participation; we do not demand it. It is my wish that kriya initiates be attentive to living a good, purposeful life, adhere to their spiritual practices, grow quickly through the stages of spiritual growth in accord with their capacity to do so, and fully awaken to Self- and God-realization.

To paraphrase my guru's words: A spiritual organization is the hive; God is the honey. If the honey of God is not there, the organization has no real value. Our ministry is of real value because it is God-centered.

I am sometimes asked about the future of our work. It will be what it will be in accord with our right endeavors and God's grace. I will never retire from active ministry service—I will continue to serve until I can no longer do it. What I do is not a job; it is my destined duty to represent our kriya yoga tradition as a guru-successor to my guru. Gurus are not employed by an organization and sent into retirement. An organized work is an extension of the guru's consciousness and vision. Spiritual force flows from the guru to the people who are being served. An organized endeavor is useful only as it serves as a vehicle through which spiritual force can flow.

News

If you live within convenient travel distance of one of the seminar sites listed on the back cover of this issue of Radiance, be there. Tell your spiritually inclined friends and associates about the seminars and request printed announcement brochures from the CSA office to distribute in your community. Request a quantity of brochures, and posters, to place in book and health food stores and wherever they may be seen by interested persons.

If you are planning to be at CSA headquarters in May for one or more weeks of retreat experience, reserve early. Also reserve early if you want to attend a retreat here later in the summer.

INDIA
Because of global unrest after the unfortunate event that occurred in New York City in September, my October India visit was canceled. It may be rescheduled for October 2002. Our outreach in India is progressing. Eight of my books are now published there and two are in progress. We advertise monthly in two magazines, free sample copies of Truth Journal are airmailed to persons who e-mail a request, and approximately 500 persons are on our India mailing list. We will soon begin publication of a newsletter for our Indian members and friends.

GERMANY
The seminar that was announced for April in Munich also had to be canceled. It will be rescheduled, for perhaps later in 2002. Contact Harald and Marlies Reiske in Passau, Germany.
Tel: (0851) 54283. E-mail: reiske@kriya-yoga.de
Website: www.kriya-yoga.de

Nowhere in the world is there anything that purifies that is equal to God-knowledge. That devotee who is perfected in yoga [samadhi], in the course of time discovers that knowledge in the Self.

– Bhagavad Gita 4:38

Private Retreats At CSA Headquarters
For CSA Members and Kriya Initiates

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- Reservations required.
- Request travel directions if needed.

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Regular summer retreat schedules open to everyone are published in *Truth Journal* and our newsletter.

Meditation Seminars 2002

Kriya initiation will be offered to CSA members and other prepared applicants at these (*) locations. Kriya initiates are invited to attend for review and to renew their commitment to practice. Donation basis. Reservations needed only for Ft. Lauderdale, Costa Mesa, San Jose, and Munich seminars.

FLORIDA *Fort Lauderdale: Sunday, February 17, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Hilton Hotel, Ft. Lauderdale Airport, 1870 Griffin Road,
Dania Beach.

ARIZONA Peoria: Wednesday, March 13, 7 p.m.
Sponsored by Center for Spiritual Unfoldment. Masonic Fellowship Center, 18810 N. 107th Avenue. Just north of Union Hills Ave.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
*Costa Mesa: Sunday, March 17, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Holiday Inn, 3131 South Bristol Street. Off I-405 (turn south).
One mile west of Orange County/John Wayne Airport.

OREGON Medford: Tuesday, March 19, 7 p.m.
Red Lion Hotel, 200 North Riverside.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA Redding: Thursday, March 21, 7 p.m.
Redding Church of Religious Science, 1905 Hartnell Avenue.

*San Jose: Saturday, March 23, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Center for Spiritual Enlightenment, 1146 University Avenue.

GERMANY
*Munich: To be announced. See page 22.

FLORIDA Naples: Sunday, April 14, 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Unity of Naples, 2000 Unity Way.

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RADIANCE

A Quarterly Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

April – June 2002

I agree that yoga [samadhi] is not easy to accomplish by one whose self-conscious nature is uncontrolled; but by the devotee whose self-conscious nature is subjected to the Self's will, by right endeavor and proper means it is possible to accomplish. – *The Bhagavad Gita 6:36*

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Kriya Yoga Practice Supported by Knowledge is Effective

Samadhi without complete knowledge may be temporary. From this state, one may progress to higher realizations or become involved again with the gross realm and the actions of nature.

– *Patanjali's yoga-sutras 1:19*

Samadhi "brings together" our awareness with the field of supreme Consciousness. Although we are always one with supreme Consciousness even when we do not know it, we can directly experience it during episodes of samadhi.

Preliminary samadhi states may be experiences of bliss or a sense of oneness (or communion), yet knowledge of our true nature and the reality of God may not be complete. If we are intent on discovering the reality of God we may progress to more clarified states of samadhi during which knowledge is apprehended. If we are not alert, we may again identify with mundane phenomena and the influences of nature's forces. This is why yoga (samadhi) is practiced until it is perfected.

Remember that samadhi is not a passive or semiconscious state of entrancement or fascination with subtle perceptions which may be had. It is conscious, alert awareness of either being "one with" that which was contemplated (or comes forth spontaneously) or realization of a transcendent state which is beyond identification with meditative perceptions (bliss, joy, light, the Om vibration, or other perceptions).

The knowledge that is acquired by superconscious means should be examined and verified. This can be done by rational analysis, intuition, and comparison of samadhi insights with the teachings of Self-realized people.

On December 25, 1949, during my first conversation with my guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, he told me to read only his books

and recommended scriptures for one year. He wanted me to read only essential information, practice meditation, and cultivate awareness of God. Later, on another occasion, he said, "When your powers of discernment are well-developed, you can read anything without becoming confused." As time passed, I discovered that his advice was of great value. Not only did I become more Self- and God-aware, I was able to easily discriminate between truth and untruth.

Read the Bhagavad Gita, Patanjali's yoga-sutras, *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*, *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*, and other basic books until you grasp the philosophical concepts that are described, acquire insight into the processes of cosmic manifestation (and expression), know how to live effectively, and can meditate skillfully. You will then be able to more easily know what is occurring during superconscious states and what is perceived and experienced will be more readily understood.

Knowledge that is acquired as a result of reading, thinking, and meditative superconscious episodes should enable you to be inwardly peaceful in all circumstances while you are living more effectively. Remember Paramahansa Yogananda's words in one of his correspondence lessons written during the 1920s: "Banish the idea that there is a separation between spiritual life and material life." Don't think that study of metaphysical concepts and meditation practice is for the purpose of enabling you to escape from or avoid mundane responsibilities.

Learn to live effectively; skillful living is yoga practice that can be engaged in at all times. When performing your duties, nurturing relationships, achieving worthwhile goals—be soul-centered and God-aware. Weaken and dissolve ego-sense (the illusional sense of selfhood) by viewing yourself as an agent of divine purposes—a participant in the drama of life. You will then become increasingly aware of your relationship with the Infinite. You will not only experience superconscious samadhi states when meditating, you will eventually always be Self- and God-realized, no matter what you are doing.

Frequent meditative superconscious states purify mind and clarify awareness. Interruptions of concentration are few or absent when attention is internalized. With practice, you will be able to maintain your clarity of awareness after meditation practice: first for a short time, then always. The Self- and God-aware state is the permanent state to be realized. When you are established in it, although there may be some subconscious conditionings yet to be weakened and removed, more knowledge to acquire, or more skills to learn, from that stage onward your spiritual growth will be more rapid. You will know what cannot be learned from books or even the words of a wise person. Knowledge will be both unfolded from within you and directly discerned by observation.

The one Consciousness has knowledge of itself. You, as an individualized unit of the one Consciousness have knowledge of Consciousness (God) and its processes within you. When you read words of truth and they are "real" to you, you are being reminded of what is so. You could not recognize the truth if you did not already have it within you. Unrecognized facts are only concepts which, even though true, are not apprehended as being true.

In the first chapter of Patanjali's yoga-sutras, it is said that one means of acquiring valid (reliable) knowledge is to learn from someone who is already knowledgeable or enlightened. Reading accurate descriptions of philosophical concepts and about how spiritual growth can be made easier is a practical way to acquire knowledge that is useful.

The more knowledgeable you are, the easier and faster your spiritual progress will be.

Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all your getting, get understanding. – *The Proverbs 4:7*

Meditation Practice

How to Improve Your Kriya Meditation Routines

Austerity; study; and surrender to God are the means by which perfect concentration [and inner peace] can be accomplished. This is the path of kriya yoga. It is practiced to remove all physical and mental obstacles to God-realization. – *Patanjali's yoga-sutras 2:1,2*

Austerity is disciplined, intentional living: skillful doing of what needs to be done while disregarding what is not useful. (Review the yamas and niyamas in the second chapter of the yoga-sutras and grade yourself on your performance.)

Study includes intellectual inquiry into and calm analysis of our true nature and the one field of Consciousness (God).

Surrender to God is surrender *in* God by first discerning the difference between the habit-maintained illusional sense of selfhood and our pure-conscious essence of being; then by letting go of the subtle sense of being separate from God.

Note that attentive kriya yoga practice removes obstacles to God-realization. When physical and mental conditions that restrict our innate urge to be Self-realized are absent, Self- and God-realization occurs spontaneously. In our urgency to experience rapid spiritual growth, we may overlook the fact that our right endeavor is for the purpose of ridding ourselves of all that prevents it. We may wonder why we cannot more easily understand metaphysical principles, why it seems that we have so many difficulties and troubles, or why God does not more obviously assist us. The truth is, we already have the basic information we need and the means by which we can help ourselves—if we are motivated to do so.

Many initiates presume themselves to be practicing kriya yoga because they are using the meditation techniques they learned when initiated. They are forgetful (or unaware) of the need for disciplined, intentional living; study that results in insight; and

ego-purification. If these actions (kriyas) are not performed (or at least attempted), one's meditation practice is unlikely to be skillful or to produce satisfactory results.

Useful Kriya Meditation Routines

When you sit to meditate, remember why you are doing it. The purpose of kriya meditation practice is to calm the mind so that superconscious states will be experienced. The ultimate aim is to abide in samadhi (clear superconsciousness). If you are primarily inclined to want to have fascinating subjective perceptions or ecstatic sensations, you are meditating for the wrong reason. Interesting or enjoyable meditative perceptions and sensations may be experienced; if they occur, observe—then transcend—them. What is seen or felt is not what you are or what pure consciousness is.

Start by acknowledging the one field of existence-being and the fact that you are an individualized unit of it. Doing this can immediately remove the mistaken idea that you are but a limited human creature attempting to be Self-realized.

Acknowledge the lineage of gurus, thankful that through them you have been given the gift of knowledge of the kriya yoga path.

Begin meditation with devotion—with fervent aspiration to have your awareness clarified and restored to wholeness. If you already have a keen understanding of your true nature and your relationship with the Infinite, aspire to awaken more fully to the wholeness of life. You will then avoid the mistake of trying to "become" enlightened. You will know that, at the core of your being, you are already enlightened. When the mind is calm and your awareness is clear, the light (reality along with knowledge) of the essence of your being will shine of its own accord.

Practice kriya pranayama and jyoti mudra as prescribed, and rest in the deep silence after using each technique. If you also use one or more of the supplemental techniques, also sit in the deep silence after doing them.

Remain alert and attentive. Keep your awareness focused at the spiritual eye (the very front region of the brain related to concentration and discernment). You may also be aware in the higher brain (and perhaps just above it).

When your mind is calm and your attention is internalized, meditation will flow spontaneously and smoothly while you observe and experience what occurs.

When doing kriya pranayama, inhale a little more deeply than usual, pulling the current up through the spine from the base chakra into the front region of the brain; let the current flow down through the brain and spine as you exhale. If you are a new kriya pranayama practitioner, do 6 or 7 repetitions a minute until you acquire proficiency, then do them more slowly. Discover the speed that is comfortable for you, neither fast nor slow.

One initiate recently informed me that he felt he had better results by practicing kriya pranayama with short, quick inhalations and exhalations. It is all right to do two or three short, quick pranayamas for the purpose of awakening the life force in the lower chakras before starting the regular routine. Then, bringing the current upward and letting it flow down should be regulated as explained in the preceding paragraph.

When the mind is calm after using a meditation technique, contemplate to have more insight or to experience samadhi. Meditative contemplation is 1) concentration on an object to be comprehended or an ideal to be realized; 2) uninterrupted concentration (meditation); 3) insight into what one aspires to know or absorption of attention in the ideal to be experienced.

Sitting in the silence aspiring to apprehend and experience pure existence-being is a useful contemplative exercise. If you sit long enough, watching and waiting, without harboring any rigid ideas or notions about what is to be experienced, your innate intelligence, and grace, will determine the outcome.

One (supreme) Self is the ultimate Reality. Let your spiritual path be God-communion. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

Insight

The Wisdom of Saints

Several months after he became a disciple of Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda impulsively left the ashram to go to the Himalayas, where he hoped to meditate in solitude and attain Self-realization. After several troublesome travel episodes, he met a secluded disciple (Ram Gopal) of Lahiri Mahasaya who advised him to return to the ashram and meditate in his room. Shortly thereafter, he had his first experience of cosmic consciousness. (*Autobiography of a Yogi*, chapter 14.)

As a young man, Sri Yukteswar traveled widely in India to meet and talk with saints and sages. When he met Lahiri Mahasaya, he was immediately initiated into kriya yoga. After several years of practice, he was given permission to initiate others. Sri Yukteswar trained Paramahansa for his mission of teaching yoga in America.

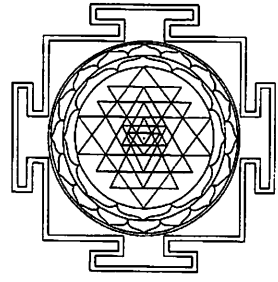
Lahiri Mahasaya demonstrated by personal example that it is possible to accomplish Self- and God-realization while living in the midst of everyday circumstances. He advised most of his disciples not to renounce the world, but to fulfill their obligations to society and privately practice meditation on a regular schedule, as he did.

Babaji's mission in the current era (which will continue for several thousand years) is to remain in seclusion, work with a few spiritually advanced souls, and radiate divine influences into the collective consciousness of the planet. He has said, "Few people [whose awareness is ordinary] know that God's wholeness extends fully to this earth plane."

Commentary

Using the Sri Yantra for Meditative Contemplation

This article is a revised and enlarged version of information that was first published in the May-June 2000 issue of Truth Journal.



A yantra represents cosmic forces which manifest as and express in the universe. The prefix *sri* indicates auspiciousness (good fortune).

Yantras may be engraved on gold, silver, copper, or any metal; carved on stone; drawn on paper or an object; or painted in colors.

Sri Yantra is used by some accomplished yogis, especially by those whose powers of intelligence and intuition have been highly developed, to meditatively contemplate the processes of cosmic manifestation and absolute (pure) Consciousness from and by which the universe is emanated. To do this, the significance of the triangles, circles, and other symbols that comprise the yantra should first be understood.

Sanskrit mantras are considered to be sound frequencies of cosmic powers; yantras indicate the form-patterns of those powers—which, because of their influences, are sometimes referred to as "gods" or "goddesses" (deities). There is only one power of Consciousness; it expresses as various aspects to perform specific cosmic functions.

Sri Yantra has five triangles with their apex downward and four triangles with their apex upward. The five downward pointing triangles represent the descent of divine power (Shiva) and its creative force (shakti) into and as matter. Thus both masculine and feminine characteristics are portrayed. The four upward pointing triangles represent the ascent of divine power to its

source. The square form contains and protects the cosmic forces.

The dot in the center of the design represents kundalini, the power of supreme Consciousness in a static (motionless) state with infinite potential to manifest. It is that state from which universes emerge and to which they return when they are dissolved. Cosmic kundalini enlivens and vitalizes living things; our kundalini energies enliven and vitalize us. The one power of Consciousness expressing in the cosmos and our innate power is the same. As a result of right living, devotion to God and the ideal of God-realization, and practice of kriya meditation methods, our inherent power awakens and contributes to our spiritual growth.

A variety of meanings can be assigned to the various parts of the yantra. When seeing a triangle, one can be reminded of the three gunas, the constituent attributes of nature which are influential in the Godhead (Cosmic Soul or Oversoul), the field of Primordial Nature, all levels and aspects of objective cosmic manifestation, and the minds and bodies of humans and creatures. One can also be reminded of the three ordinary states of awareness: deep sleep (unconsciousness), the dream state, and the waking state—as well as the fourth state of unmodified, superconsciousness which transcends them.

The outermost circles may remind one of siddhis, various exceptional powers of perception and functional ability that may be acquired as a result of spiritual awakening—which are primarily to be used by yogis to nurture spiritual growth until complete liberation of consciousness is accomplished. The middle circle can remind the devotee of ritual gestures which may be used to support or indicate a sincere intention to enter into and have a meaningful relationship with the Infinite.

The sixteen outer lotus petals can signify cosmic powers related to desires associated with intellect, ego (the illusional sense of selfhood), sound, touch, form, taste, smell, fortitude or the ability to endure hardship, memory, name or presumed self-identity, our true essence, idea of soul, body, immortality, or what-

ever else may be thought about. The eight inner lotus petals can remind one of cosmic forces which operate through the mind and body.

When contemplating the wholeness of Consciousness, one may be reminded that it alone makes accomplishments possible; is the source and substance of wealth; the doer of all that occurs; that which (when apprehended) removes suffering, sorrow, and obstacles; and the provider of good fortune. One can further be inspired to contemplate the fact that Consciousness is omniscient, omnipresent, and supports the actions and processes of nature while, at the inmost level, is ever pure existence-Being.

Seeing the downward pointed triangles one can ponder the categories and processes of cosmic manifestation:

- The power of Consciousness emanates from the Oversoul as a continuous vibration pervaded by the intelligence of Consciousness and the three gunas.
- The Om vibration manifests within itself primary cosmic forces, space, and time: the field of Primordial Nature which somewhat "covers" Consciousness and from which the fine essences of the universe are emanated.

  Units of pure Consciousness are individualized because of interactions between Consciousness and inertia inherent in the field of Primordial Nature. Pure Consciousness is referred to as the Supreme Self; a unit is the true Self of the individualized aspect. When the awareness of the individualized unit or Self becomes overly identified with primordial nature and its characteristics (usually because of the influence of inertia), its powers of perception become diminished and delusions (erroneous notions) and illusions (mistakes in perception) result. The deluded unit is then referred to as a soul in need of being restored to its original, pure or unmodified state of awareness.
- Causal, astral, and physical realms emanated from the field of Primordial Nature are pervaded by cosmic forces which are

regulated by the intelligence of Consciousness and the influences of interactions that constantly occur between the three gunas. The characteristics of the gunas are the power of attraction; the heaviness of inertia; and the transformative actions which occur because of these interactions.

- When analyzing the processes of cosmic manifestation, one may contemplate or visualize the five subtle essences of the senses of hearing, touch, sight, smell and taste which, when we are incarnated, enable us to perceive the varied aspects of objective phenomena. The five subtle essences of the organs of action which make possible speech, dexterity, mobility, reproduction, and elimination. And the five subtle essences of elements (space with cosmic forces, air or gas*, fire or transformative influences, water, and "earth" which interact and combine to manifest gross matter. One may also be inclined to ponder why and how souls individualize and become involved with cosmic processes, and how awareness can be most easily and quickly restored to the original state of wholeness.

Observing the upward pointing triangles, one is reminded that everything that comes into manifestation will eventually return to the source. By internalized meditative contemplation on the reality of Consciousness and its processes of cosmic manifestation, the devotee can use powers of discriminative intelligence and intuition to apprehend its wholeness. By gradually or suddenly withdrawing attention from the objective realm, the senses, mental and emotional states, and the illusional (mistaken) idea of selfhood, absolute existence-being can be realized.

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*The state of matter differentiated from solid and liquid states by very low density and viscosity, rather than great expansion and contraction with changes in pressure and temperature, the ability to diffuse readily, and the spontaneous tendency to become distributed uniformly in a given space. (*Webster's New Riverside University Dictionary*; 1984.)

Dialogue

Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Themes are provided by readers and other kriya initiates. Participate in these dialogues by sending your questions or comments.

Sometimes, while in a meditative state, questions will surface in my mind, such as how to solve a personal problem or how to achieve a goal. Insight will then provide me with the solution. Are these "revelations" from Cosmic Mind, or someone in this or another realm with whom I am in telepathic communication?

Answer to questions or solutions to problems do not come from outside of yourself. Creative ideas arise from within your mind. Your intellectual or intuitive powers provide insights. If you pray to God or a saint for guidance and you have a helpful response, it is because you are receptive to apprehending the knowledge that is always at the core of your being. To think that knowledge must come from an external source is to be dependent on that erroneous notion. It can also lead to irrational thinking or fantasy—which are to be avoided by a truth seeker.

I've heard it said that the seven major chakras are related to the seven colors of the light spectrum. Is this so?

There is no correlation. The colors red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet can be observed when sunlight passes through a glass prism. The colors of the energies of the chakras, which may be inwardly perceived, are produced by their vibrational frequencies. Some of the information about chakras (astral centers in the spine and brain) now published is not reliable. Among "new age" groups it is not uncommon for gemstones, music, colors of light, and laying on of hands to be recommended for awakening or balancing the energies of the chakras. Yogis should not be involved with such activities. They can practice

asanas, mudras, and kriya pranayama, and chant Om or other mantras to enliven kundalini energies.

If God's wholeness extends fully to the earth realm, why the conflict in the world, and why is it so difficult for me to have a comfortable, satisfying life?

Conflicts exist because many people lack understanding and are greedy and selfish. The fact of God's wholeness is not easily comprehended, or actually perceived, by individuals whose awareness is ordinary (fragmented and blurred). Because you want to know your true nature and the one field of Consciousness, you can, by purifying your mind and clarifying your awareness, be a conscious knower of the truth that will liberate you from all difficulties and allow you to live peacefully and effectively.

I'm confused about my meditation practice. I have been doing the kriya meditation techniques for two years. Recently I was introduced to, and have been experimenting with, the mantra method taught by TM teachers. Should I use both: the kriya meditation techniques and the TM mantra that I learned?

Dedicated kriya yogis should not experiment with methods which, while perhaps useful for others, are not in accord with our kriya yoga tradition. The TM (Transcendental Meditation) mantra technique is a valid method for persons who have been initiated in that tradition. The process is the same as that practiced by meditators who use Om, hong-sau, so-hum, or any traditional mantra. The energy frequency infused into a TM mantra at the time of initiation is not the same as the energy frequency of our guru tradition. By mixing the techniques, there is a possibility of adulterating (weakening or making impure) the energy frequencies that flow through a lineage of enlightened teachers. The guru of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was an enlightened sage. He used Sri Yantra as a focus for meditative contemplation.

When meditating I occasionally experience a state of pure thought-free existence-being. Is this what it is like when a Self-realized person leaves the body? Do we cease to be aware of our individuality?

At the time of transition from the physical body, our state of consciousness is determined by the degree of clarity of our awareness. We may experience pure consciousness devoid of modifying influences or a superconscious state may be somewhat blurred by thoughts, emotions, or subliminal influences.

If pure consciousness is experienced, our sense of individual selfhood may cease—permanently if we are prepared for that, or temporarily if subconscious influences exist which may be activated or if we have a mission in space-time to complete.

My desire to be Self- and God-realized is so insistent that nothing else seems important. I am not happy in my present circumstances and can't claim any obvious spiritual progress. What can I do to know God?

Be one hundred percent dedicated to kriya yoga practice: 1) discipline your thoughts, emotions, and actions; 2) study to improve your understanding of the mundane laws of cause and effect and metaphysical (beyond the physical) principles; 3) develop powers of discernment until you can always know the difference between your Self and ordinary states of awareness; 4) practice kriya meditation methods; 5) learn to live effectively.

To derive utmost benefits from a relationship with a guru or spiritual teacher, what qualities should I nurture?

Humility, willingness to learn and apply what is learned, absence of mental perversity (a tendency to misinterpret or twist the teacher's words to satisfy self-centered purposes), and respect for the teaching tradition and the teacher. If your guru is enlightened, accept what you are told without having any reservations or doubts. In the early 1950s, when I was with Parama-

hansa Yogananda, he only spoke the truth and always encouraged me to live a good life and deeply meditate. When he corrected my mental attitude or behavior he said, "I only want you to be as [spiritually] strong as I am."

A guru's primary role is to assist the disciple (learner) to emotional maturity and Self- and God-realization. A disciple's responsibility is to take full advantage of the opportunity that a meaningful guru-disciple relationship provides.

How, and why, was the universe created?

A universe is produced when an impulse in the one field of Consciousness activates the manifestation process. A universe exists for as long as the effects of the original impulse persist. After billions of solar years (in relationship to our universe) a universe dissolves as its energies flow back to its source and are dormant until another impulse activates a creation process.

In the March 2002 issue of *Discover* magazine, I read an article in which theories about the creation and dissolution of universes were presented. Some scientists say that a universe may be "eternal"—that it periodically appears and disappears while its energy remains constant. One theory is that when a universe dissolves, its energies manifest as another universe in a different field of space-time. Not all scientists are comfortable presenting these theories to the general public (or even to their colleagues) because they cannot be verified or may seem to more properly belong to the field of philosophy rather than science.

When may I teach these kriya yoga methods, and when may I initiate others?

You may do this when you are ready. Ask your guru if you are ready. If you are, he or she will affirm it. If you are not yet ready, prepare yourself by living in the right way and cultivating your spiritual growth.

My guru ordained me to teach and initiate after I had been

with him for almost two years (autumn 1951). Although I was not then prepared to teach or initiate, he ordained me then because he knew he would depart this world early the following year. I began to teach, in accord with the lesson plans of the Self-Realization Fellowship, when I was told that it was my guru's wish that I be installed as the minister of the SRF Center in Phoenix, Arizona, after his mahasamadhi (a yogi's conscious departure from the body) on March 7, 1952. I did not begin to initiate until a few years later, after I had voluntarily left the SRF monastic Order. By leaving the Order I did not renounce any vows because I had never been asked to take any. My personal relationship with my guru, rather than any formal organizational agreement was, and is, my bond with him and the lineage of gurus of this kriya tradition.

To teach and to initiate others in the practices of kriya yoga should not be what one desires to do; one should be "willing" to do it and complete the necessary training and preparation so that what is to be taught will be accurate and the spiritual power can freely flow.

When, as a teacher, I speak or write, I am not conscious of any personal need to be appreciated. When I initiate, I am but representing my guru and the lineage of gurus—and view myself as an agent through which useful information and spiritual force can flow to meet needs. Whatever benefits may result are not due to my efforts; they are both the effects and the evidence of redemptive grace.

I have kriya initiate friends who like to talk about other kriya teachers and organizations. Sometimes the conversations do not seem to be useful. What are your thoughts about this?

I recommend less talking and more intentional cultivation of one's Self- and God-awareness and appropriate behavior. Sharing worthwhile information can be useful; much talking, comparing, faultfinding, and gossip is useless, contributes to mental

restlessness and emotional instability, dissipates vital forces, and weakens the body's immune system. Useless talking diverts attention from important matters and distracts it from spiritual practices. Now that internet access is readily available, many kriya yogis who should be directing their attention to meaningful learning, purposeful living, and spiritual growth are wasting much time browsing web sites and sending trivial e-mail messages to friends and casual contacts. Paramahansa Yogananda frequently reminded disciples to direct their attention and energies to essential matters and of the spiritual value of silence. Excessive talking energizes subliminal tendencies (vasanas) that cause mental and emotional restlessness and interferes with attempts to think clearly and concentrate.

Is it possible to be so enlightened that yoga practices are no longer necessary?

When established in Self- and God-realization, one lives freely and spontaneously. Yoga practices may still be used to further cleanse the subconscious levels of mind and refine the nervous system or to maintain physical health. Meditation will be practiced to experience pure transcendent superconscious states. The final stage is complete liberation of consciousness.

This teaching, with rational philosophical concepts, holistic lifestyle recommendations, and effective spiritual practices is so practical and helpful that I wonder why more people are not attracted to it.

This path is for anyone who is sufficiently intelligent to understand its usefulness and chooses to live an intentional, God-centered life. Because it is the quiet, inner way to Self-discovery and spiritual enlightenment, it doesn't appeal to people who are primarily interested in external matters. The average person has to have a radical change in viewpoint to be able to understand that he or she is an immortal spiritual being temporarily relat-

ing to the human condition and be motivated to nurture authentic spiritual growth. For many people, their ordinary activities and relationships and habitual routines are more appealing than the possibility of being Self- and God-realized.

Another reason why more people are not attracted to this path is they don't know about it. They haven't discovered it as a result of their own inquiry into the real meaning of life or haven't been informed. We should let others whom we know to be spiritually inclined know about this kriya yoga path. We should not attempt to convert anyone to our views; our role is to provide information and allow others freedom to choose for themselves. (See the news section on page 22.)

Some organizations charge high prices for meditation classes and initiations. What are your thoughts about this?

I do not accept payment for personal instruction and our retreats and seminars are offered on a donation basis because I think these teachings should be freely shared. Those who are benefited should voluntarily support organizational activities which are of value to them and help with endeavors to extend the teachings to others. My understanding is that when I give freely from the Source, the Source provides for ministry needs through its agents (people who can afford to financially support the ministry and do it because they want to). The belief that "others will only consider what they have to pay for to be of real value" is often a faulty rationalization for personal insecurity or greed (a desire to acquire wealth, power, or recognition in excess of what one actually requires or deserves).

When I meditate, I sometimes feel dizzy or have a sensation that I am about to leave my body.

Maintain a poised, upright meditation posture and remain aware as an observer of what you experience. Stay centered and watchful. If the symptoms persist, open your eyes, look straight

ahead without focusing your gaze on anything. Just be there in that calm, alert state until you are peaceful and your awareness is clear.

I often experience mental peace and clarity of awareness after doing just four or five kriya pranayamas. Should I stop there and enjoy the peaceful silence, or should I continue until I have completed my usual number of pranayamas?

If you accomplish a tranquil state after a few pranayamas, it is all right to stop for a while and experience the deep silence. Then, before concluding your practice session, do the rest of the pranayamas to enliven the chakras and refine your nervous system. If you usually do more than 14 pranayamas, it is not necessary to do an excessive number of them. As an example: if you usually do 50 pranayamas and experience superconsciousness after having done only a few, be absorbed in the superconscious state for as long as you can, then do 10 or 20 pranayamas to have the benefits of the enlivening and refining effects.

I occasionally meditate with a few friends who are also kriya initiates. Some of them like to engage in devotional chanting before settling down to meditate. I prefer a silent approach to meditation practice. Am I missing something?

The psychological characteristics of devotees differ. Some like to chant; others are not inclined to do it. Chanting can be beneficial by having a calming effect on the mind. It can also contribute to orderly brain function as well as elicit feelings of devotion, allowing concentration to be easier.

News

Our meditation seminar in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in February was attended many of our members and by others who participated for the first time. A initiation service was also conducted.

A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice (book)

If you do not yet have a copy of this book, use the enclosed form to request it, or telephone, fax, or e-mail. If you have friends who are kriya initiates, request free copies for them, also.

Expanded Book Distribution Project

Read about this project in the May issue of the CSA Newsletter to be mailed in April. Participate to the fullest extent possible, for your own benefit and to bless others.

In Fond Memory

Richard Wright, elder brother of Faye Wright (Sri Daya Mata, president of Self-Realization Fellowship) made his transition on January 9. During his final months he resided at the SRF Encinitas, California, retreat center where he was cared for by members of the organization's monastic order.

Mr. Wright met Paramahansa Yogananda in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1931 when his guru was presenting a series of lectures and classes. He then moved to California for discipleship training. He is known to readers of *Autobiography of a Yogi* because he traveled to India (1935-1936) with Paramahansa Yogananda and wrote of various events which were included in that book.

Mr. Wright later married, worked for a California company for several years, and maintained a close relationship with his brother and sister disciples.

A memorial article is published in the Spring issue of *Self-Realization* magazine.

All constructive work is purifying when performed with the right motive. – *Paramahansa Yogananda*

Private Retreats At CSA Headquarters For CSA Members and Kriya Initiates

Autumn 2002 Schedule

September 8-13 • September 15-20 • September 22-27

Limited to 20 participants.
Stay for one, two, or three weeks.

Arrive Saturday or Sunday.
Private, Comfortable Guest House Rooms Provided
Prepare Your Own Vegetarian Meals

- One Hour Meditation at 6 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Class on kriya yoga philosophy and practices at 7 a.m.
- Two hours of light work-service daily.
- Free time for rest, private study, and quiet reflection.
- Donation basis.
- Reservations required.
- Request travel directions if needed.

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Fax (706) 782-4560 anytime E-mail csainc@csa-davis.org
Internet web site www.csa-davis.org

Regular summer retreat schedules open to everyone are published in *Truth Journal* and our newsletter.

MEDITATION SEMINARS

NAPLES, FLORIDA
Sunday, April 14: 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.
At Unity of Naples
2000 Unity Way

Donation Basis
Reservations Are Not Necessary

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO
Saturday: April 20, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Radisson Hotel & Conference Center
2500 Carlisle NE (I-40 & Carlisle)

Donation Basis
Reservations Requested
Kriya Yoga Initiation 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Contact Center for Spiritual Awareness
by mail, phone, fax, or e-mail.

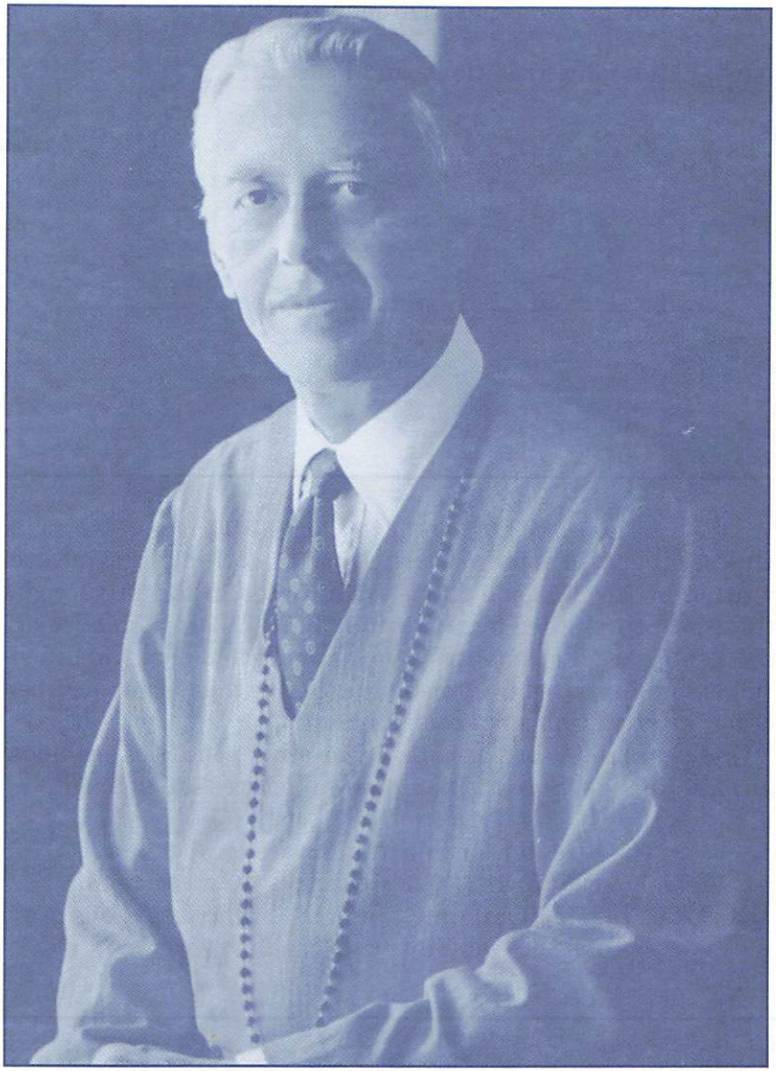
Or Ellie Hadsall in Albuquerque
Tel: 505-271-2720 E-mail: ehadsall@aol.com

Tell Your Friends About These Opportunities

RADIANCE

A Quarterly Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

July – September 2002



As a lamp in a windless place does not flicker, to such is compared the concentration of the meditator who, with subliminal impulses subdued, practices the yoga of samadhi. – *The Bhagavad Gita 6:19*

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Unless otherwise noted, the articles in *Radiance* magazine are written by Roy Eugene Davis for initiates in the kriya yoga tradition represented by Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda, and their qualified successors. Initiated CSA members receive this magazine free. Other kriya initiates may subscribe.

One year, $6.00 in the U.S.; $8 in other countries includes airmail postage. Subscription renewal notices are not sent.

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Yoga Philosophy and Essential Practices

Yoga-darshana, commonly translated as "yoga philosophy," means more than speculative ideas. *Darshana* means "to see" or directly perceive the truth of what is observed. For the yogi engaged in disciplines and practices that will calm the mind and clarify awareness, what is to be perceived is the reality of the essence of being in contrast to conditioned states of awareness.

Exactly when in human history yogic procedures were first practiced is not known. Patanjali (circa 200 C.E.), in his yoga-sutras (chapter 1, verse 1), affirmed that his purpose was to present in concise form the essential principles and practices which had been known for centuries. Yogic methods are described in the Bhagavad-Gita, which was composed at least two thousand years before Patanjali lived.

To become proficient in the practice of yoga (as defined by Patanjali), a sincere practitioner's endeavors must go to the core or root source of life rather than be considered as ways to merely somewhat improve the human condition—which is the unenlightened motive of many people who now practice some forms of yoga. In an article published in *Forbes* magazine a few months ago, the number of people in the United States who practice yoga was estimated to be fourteen million—most of whom are primarily interested in health benefits. Regardless of the reasons that people may have for practicing yoga, their participation is of value to them and their acknowledgment of its usefulness serves to make the subject of yoga more widely known. Paramahansa Yogananda once said that yoga would eventually be taught in schools and colleges; this is now being done.

A yogi is advised to have implicit faith in the testimony of enlightened sages who have already experienced the results of their intentional practice. Spiritually knowledgeable yogis declare all things in the realm of nature to be insubstantial; hav-

ing come into manifestation, in the course of time their present forms will cease to exist. Behind the veil of nature is a reality which is permanently unchanging, just as at the core of our being we are forever changeless. While living in the realm of nature, the yogi is not obsessively or blindly attached to any external thing or relationship, not even to his or her thoughts or feelings, which are obviously constantly changing.

Even before Self-realization occurs, yogis should use their powers of intellectual discernment to perceive the difference between their essence of being and what they observe. They will then be aware of being other than a body which was born and other than a mind which processes information derived from perceptions. They should realize the futility of completely relying on external conditions for their well-being or permanent happiness.

Although the material universe is real because it is formed by the energy of Consciousness, if we are only capable of perceiving its external aspects, it appears to us to be illusory. Material substance is not independent of its source, nor does its existence depend on our perception of it.

Knowing the facts of life should not cause a truth seeker to be sad or apathetic (mentally lazy, emotionally depressed and disinterested in personal duties, worthwhile projects, or meaningful relationships). Yogis are advised to live effectively and support the trends of evolution without strong attachments to their constructive actions or to the results of such actions.

For the value of yoga practices to be comprehended, they must be diligently applied to allow personal experience that will verify them. Only that person knows yoga who practices yoga.

Yoga is conscious awareness of oneness, wholeness. In the first chapter of Patanjali's yoga-sutras, various means which may be used to realize oneness (samadhi) are described. Samadhi can occur spontaneously when the mind is calm and awareness is clear. It can also be realized by meditative contemplation on an object to which attention flows without interruption: light; sound

(Om); the bliss (sheer joy) of Self-awareness; or an aspect of God to which one is devoted. The key to successful meditative contemplation is to identify with what is looked at with alert expectation of either merging with or comprehending it.

Alert, unwavering, concentrated attention on an object of contemplation is meditation. When sustained, it culminates in samadhi. Unwavering concentration is not possible when the mind is restless or emotions are unsettled. The mind and emotions can be quieted by prayer, practice of pranayama, the use of any technique known to be helpful, nurturing aspiration to be enlightened, and fervent devotion to God.

Kriya yoga (disciplined thinking, feeling, and living; Self-discovery and metaphysical study; and surrender to God) is the way to remove all mental and physical obstacles to spiritual growth and illumination of consciousness. Patanjali described the five primary obstacles (chapter 2, verse 3) as ignorance of spiritual realities; ego-identification; sentimental attraction; aversion; and fear of death.

Lack of knowledge of spiritual realities is the cause of all other limiting characteristics. When we know our true nature as spiritual beings and the reality of Consciousness and its processes, limitations no longer exist.

The ego is a mistaken sense of selfhood. Self-knowledge purifies the ego, our perception of what we are.

Sentimental attraction to ideas, things, circumstances, and relationships interferes with rational thinking and blurs powers of discernment.

Aversion, especially to what is beneficial or life-enhancing, reinforces egocentric thinking and behavior.

Although some people say that death is feared because of subconscious memories of previous physical deaths, all living things usually try to avoid death because of their innate urge to survive. Fear of death is removed by Self- and God-knowledge.

Meditation Practice

Moving Awareness Through the Chakras

This technique can be used as a supplemental practice during longer meditation sessions or instead of kriya pranayama if one cannot practice it.

Occasions when kriya pranayama should not be practiced:

- When one is extremely tired or ill.
- If breathing is difficult.
- During pregnancy.
- During menstruation.

Mantra meditation, Om contemplation, moving awareness through the chakras, and prayer can be practiced at any time.

The Technique

Sitting in an upright posture, gaze into the spiritual eye and be aware of your spine. Feel it.

- Feel the base chakra at the bottom of your spine. Mentally chant "Om," feeling the vibration in the base chakra.
- Locate the second chakra. Mentally chant "Om," feeling the vibration there.
- Locate the third chakra. Mentally chant "Om," feeling the vibration there.
- Locate the fourth chakra between your shoulder blades. Mentally chant "Om," feeling the vibration there.
- Locate the fifth chakra in the spine opposite your throat. Mentally chant "Om," feeling the vibration there.
- Mentally chant "Om" at the spiritual eye, feeling the vibration there.
- Mentally chant "Om" in the crown chakra, feeling the vibration there. Pause for a moment. Descend through the chakras, chanting "Om" at each one, feeling the vibration.

Repeat this process a few times, concluding your practice at the crown chakra and resting in the deep silence. Listen to subtle inner sounds (if you hear them). Let your attention and awareness merge with the formless Infinite.

Optional Mantras to Use

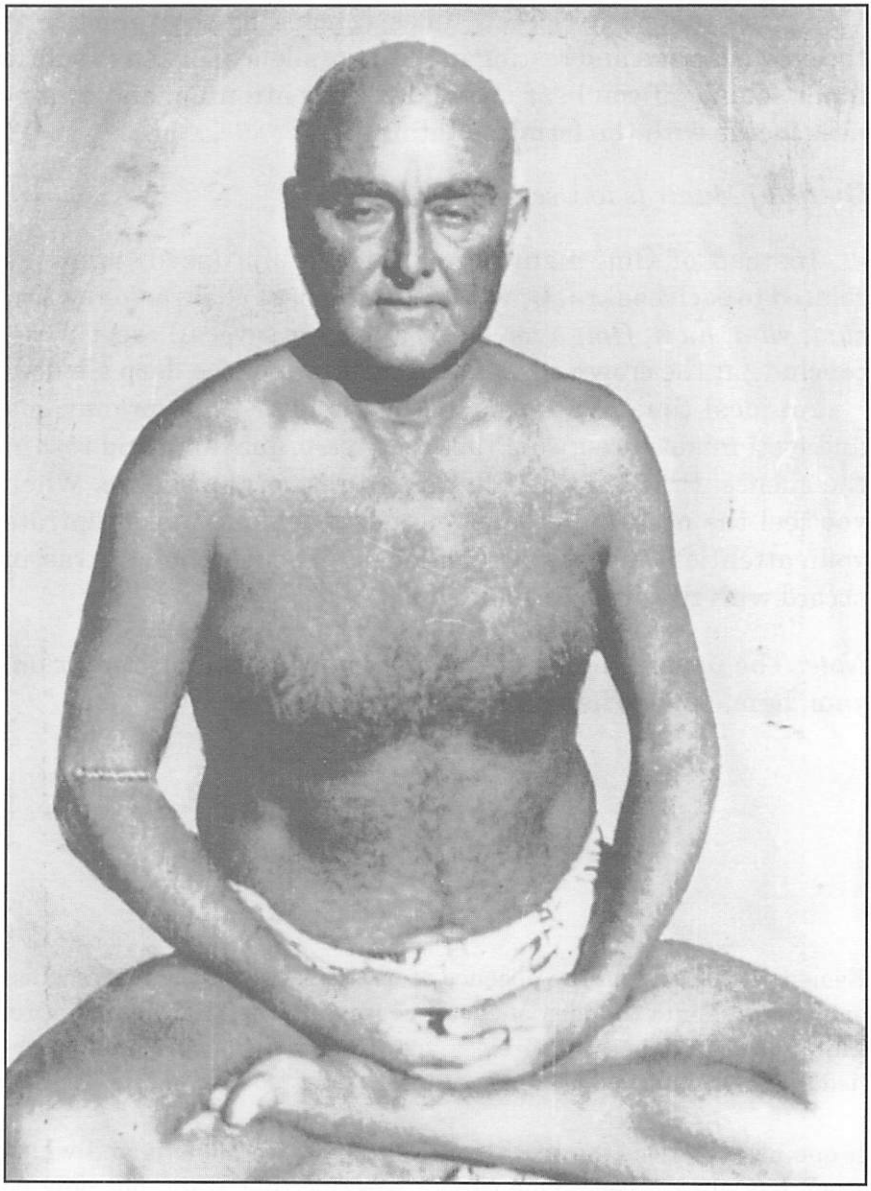
Instead of Om, mentally chant the bija (seed) mantras related to each chakra. Upward from the base chakra: *lum*, *vum*, *rum*, *yum*, *hum*, *Om*, *bum*. After a few (or several) repetitions, conclude at the crown chakra and meditate in the deep silence.

An ideal time to use this method is after kriya pranayama and jyoti mudra practice. Practice kriya pranayama and rest in the silence. Practice jyoti mudra and rest in the silence. When you feel the need to practice another technique to concentrate your attention, move your awareness through the chakras in accord with the above instructions.

Note: The usual spelling of the bija mantras is lam, vam, ram, yam, ham, bam. When pronounced, they rhyme with "some."

Egoism arises only in the absence of investigation of the truth; when one enquires into the idea of ego, it ceases to exist and there is pure, infinite consciousness. Desireless, free from delusions, remain established in Self-knowledge. – *Yoga Visistha (circa 900 – 1300)*

If one has realized [the truth], one is that which alone is and which alone has always been. One cannot describe that state, but only be That. Of course, we loosely talk of Self-realization for want of a better term [description]. – *Ramana Maharishi*



James J. Lynn (Rajarsi Janakananda)

Dialogue

Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Themes are provided by readers and other kriya initiates. Participate in these dialogues by sending your questions or comments.

I am focusing on living a more disciplined life and find that it is helpful to remember the lives of the gurus and to deepen my attunement with the kriya yoga lineage. Elaborate on the meanings of the words discipline *and* disciple.

When we are attuned to the gurus of our lineage, spiritual force and God's grace can more easily flow. Mental and spiritual attunement improves when we are thankful for the knowledge of the spiritual path we have been given, are attentive to spiritual practices, and try to always live a Self-aware, God-centered life. Paramahansa Yogananda often advised me to nurture attunement with him and the gurus, which I did, and do.

A brother disciple shared the following story:

While with our guru at Self-Realization headquarters, Mr. James J. Lynn (whom Paramahansaji had given the monastic name Rajarsi Janakananda when he publicly announced Mr. Lynn as his successor as president and spiritual head of the organization, in 1951) came into the room for a few minutes. My brother disciple was emotionally moved by Mr. Lynn's respectful demeanor. Later, Paramahansaji said, "He knows where the power comes from."

Discipline is training that is expected to produce a specific kind or pattern of behavior. A *disciple* sincerely endeavors to acquire useful knowledge and to wisely use it. Both words are from Latin *discipulus*, pupil, < *discere*, to learn.

When I was initiated, I was told to practice kriya pranayama twice each day. Is it all right to do it once a day?

It is usually recommended that the basic kriya meditation techniques be practiced morning and evening. If this is not possible, do it once a day. Some advanced meditators practice three or four times each day. If it seems that intensive practice is causing one to become too introverted, or if subconscious influences become strongly activated, the once or twice a day schedule should be maintained.

Define "samadhi" and describe the states of samadhi that one might experience.

Samadhi is superconsciousness. The early stages may be mixed with thoughts and a variety of subjective perceptions, including degrees of Self- and God-knowledge or spontaneous comprehension of aspects of the larger field of reality. When thoughts and awareness of "otherness" cease, one's samadhi is absolute or pure. The ultimate yoga practice is skillful and frequent practice of samadhi. Other helpful yoga practices can prepare the devotee for samadhi experiences.

I have seen articles and advertisements in which kriya yoga is featured. What is the difference, if any, between what other teachers present and our kriya yoga tradition?

Because the Sanskrit word *kriya* means "action" (from the verb root "to do"), all yoga practices are kriyas. The methods taught in our tradition are emphasized by our lineage of gurus as being most useful and effective.

Some yogis remain healthy and live to an advanced physical age, while others sometimes have health problems and do not live very long. What determines their health and longevity?

Health and longevity is determined by our basic mind-body constitution, lifestyle, and sense of destiny. Some yogis did not have a strong or balanced mind-body constitution when they were

born. Some are not always as attentive to self-care routines (diet, rest, exercise) as they should be. Some feel that when they have accomplished what they came here to accomplish, they should leave the body, and do.

Healthy, long life can provide opportunities for fulfilling major purposes and accomplishing full spiritual growth.

What is the reason for focusing awareness at the spiritual eye center when meditating?

It is recommended for the purpose of facilitating inward turning and concentration. As the mind becomes calm and life forces flow to the front region of the brain, tranquil states of awareness are more easily experienced. Meditating like this nurtures development of the front lobes of the brain—which are related to creativity, concentration, discernment, and the will and the courage to make right choices.

How can I know when to increase the number of repetitions of kriya pranayama? What is the best way to do this?

Increase them when you feel inclined to do so, so long as there is no undue effort or strain. Concentrated, deep practice is more useful than many superficial repetitions. Do as many as you feel comfortable doing, then sit in the silence with your awareness merged at the spiritual eye and higher brain.

Although I have been practicing kriya pranayama for several months, I don't feel an obvious surge of life force ascending the spinal pathway. What can be done about this?

Put your awareness in the spine, then move the feeling of coolness in the throat (when inhaling during kriya pranayama practice) to the spine. Imagine it as a hollow tube through which life force ascends and descends as you practice. It can also be helpful to practice hatha yoga postures that gently stretch and

twist the spine. Constantly aspire to be Self- and God-realized. Cultivate devotion.

Since our solar system is being influenced by an ascending electric time-cycle, is it certain that Planet Earth will sustain life and evolve toward a true Golden Age of enlightenment although some damage has been done to it in recent years? What will cause the time-cycles to end?

The ascending trend will continue for 7,500 years until a 4,800-year era of enlightenment, during which approximately 75 percent of the human population will be highly spiritually aware, will begin. Devotees on a spiritual path need not wait 7,500 years to experience the fulfillment and harmony that enlightenment confers. For one who is Self- and God-realized, environmental conditions are always supportive.

Time-cycles cease when a universe is dissolved. Our solar system, which occupies but a small area in our galaxy (one of several billion in the universe) should exist for many more billions of years before its sun begins to die. The universe will exist for a longer period of time. Some ancient sages in India estimated the life span of a universe to be 314,159,000,000,000 solar years (more than 300 trillion years). It is likely that our planet is not the only planet in the universe on which life is evolving.

After many years of spiritual practice, I am still endeavoring to become enlightened. What else can I do?

Are you aware that you are a spiritual being aspiring to be more awake, or do you think of yourself as human hoping to become enlightened? At the core of your being you are now whole and knowledgeable. What seems to be spiritual growth is really an unveiling of one's innate essence.

The purpose if kriya yoga practice is to remove mental and emotional restrictions that confine and blur soul awareness.

While engaged in right endeavor, nurture remembrance and

awareness of what you already are—an individualized unit of one omnipresent Consciousness. When you notice that thoughts, feelings, and behaviors reflect ordinary or modified states of awareness, adjust your point of view and mental attitude and be restored to Self- and God-awareness.

Endeavor to think, feel, and act as you will when you are spiritually enlightened. If it not easy to do this, imagine how a saint would think, feel, and act in a situation that is similar to yours, then try to do likewise. Instead of thinking or saying, "I can't do that because I'm not enlightened," affirm, "I will do my best to think rationally, be optimistic, and act wisely." Also practice keeping your awareness and life force involved with the dorsal, cervical, and spiritual eye chakras at all times.

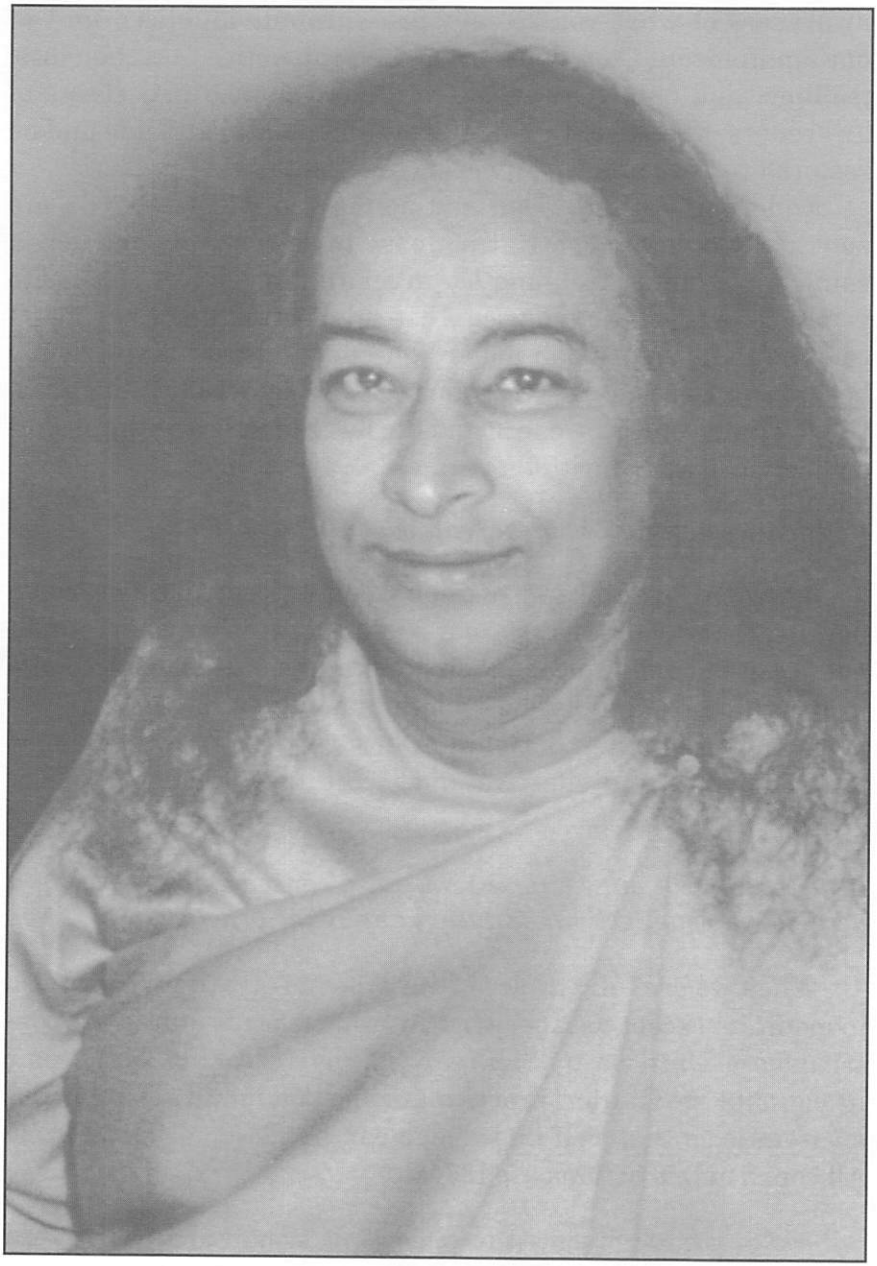
Define patience *and how one can learn to be patient.*

Patience is mental and emotional calmness at all times, when nothing that occurs disturbs our soul peace (rather than compliant acceptance of unpleasant circumstances). When we are calm in all situations, troublesome subliminal influences (*vasanas*) are more likely to remain dormant or be easily regulated. Living is then enjoyable and effective and meditation practice is easier and more satisfying.

If at the core of our being we are pure consciousness, why is it necessary to engage in meditation and other practices?

When we are fully aware of our true nature, there is no need to meditate except to experience interludes of absolute pure consciousness. Until we are Self-realized, right thinking, wholesome living, and meditation practice purifies the mind and clarifies awareness so that Self-knowledge can be more easily realized. All constructive actions are kriyas.

> Kriya yoga is practiced to remove all mental and physical obstacles to Self- and God-realization. – yoga-sutras 2:2



Paramahansa Yogananda

Thinking or believing that we are pure conscious beings is not the same as actually *knowing* it.

Do some spiritually enlightened people still have karma to work out or overcome?

Yes. One can be Self-realized and have some subconscious influences to be neutralized or transcended. This is why some enlightened souls continue their spiritual practices—not to improve their realization, but to remove all troublesome karmic conditions. The prevailing, constructive influences of superconsciousness eventually purify the mental field.

Is there any value in praying to saints or spiritual masters who are no longer embodied? Is it useful to pray to God as a Father or as a Divine Mother?

All heartfelt prayers blend the consciousness of one who prays with the one Consciousness regardless of whether one prays to formless Reality, a concept of God, or a disembodied saint or spiritual master. When praying to a saint who is no longer in this world, there is no way to know whether the saint has transcended the relative spheres, now abides in a subtle realm, or has reincarnated and is involved with their personal matters. If, when praying to a saint (or presumed saint), one experiences a sense of intimate communion with God, praying like that has value.

Thinking of God as a father or mother may help a person to feel nurtured, loved, and protected. Fixation at this level of belief can foster and perpetuate a childish mental attitude and emotional state which is not useful. Eventually all concepts, forms, and aspects of God will be transcended.

Was Krishna a real person? Some people think the words that are attributed to Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita were really spoken by him to Arjuna. What about this?

There are no accurate historical records that can provide

reliable information about Krishna. According to scholars, several "Krishnas" are described in the literature of India. Two distinct story-traditions can be discerned: Vasudeva-Krishna, a warrior prince who assists the Pandava brothers in a war against their cousins (thus the Bhagavad Gita in the longer Mahabharata epic) and who was considered to be an avatar (divinity in the flesh); a cowherd Krishna raised by village stepparents who as a child vanquishes demons, plays a flute, and has amorous relationships with the cow herd maidens (*gopis*). He selects one of them, Radha, as his consort. Folklore blends the two Krishnas.

The Bhagavad Gita is an allegory, a story in which events, objects, or characters symbolically represent an idea or moral or religious principle. The five Pandava brothers represent the five lower chakras. Arjuna represents the lumbar chakra where soul awareness is awakening to Self-knowledge, self-control and will to accomplish. Krishna represents the enlightened consciousness of the devotee on the spiritual path. (See my introduction to *The Eternal Way: The Inner Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita* for complete details regarding the meanings of the Sanskrit names of the characters mentioned in the story.)

In the popular stories about the cow herd boy Krishna, the flute represents his attracting power; his playful relationships with the cow herd girls and Radha represent the interaction of divine consciousness with various aspects of nature.

Some fundamentalist spiritual aspirants who say that God is a person and his name is Krishna may actually believe this to be so; however, belief (or personal opinion) is not truth.

I have read that saints can sometimes transfer the karma of others to themselves. Is this true? If so, how is it done—and under what circumstances?

Some saints have claimed to have done this. If it occurs, it is the result of sympathetic identification with the person who is in need of help. I do not recommend this practice. A better way to

help someone, besides educating them so that they can help themselves, is to "see through" the problem to the solution on behalf of others. If saints suffer, it is not necessarily because of their having taken on someone's karma. Suffering may be due to their own karma, genetic causes, a weak immune system, or failure to live in accord with the laws of nature because of lack of knowledge or disinterest.

When I meditate and my eyes are closed, I see various scenes of people and situations, and sometimes colorful geometrical patterns. What am I seeing? Should I try to examine what I observe?

The various scenes are produced in the mind, caused by impulses arising from unconscious levels of awareness. They are pictures of thoughts you may ordinarily think or dreams you may have when you sleep. Disregard them. Direct your attention to your meditation ideal or practice a technique that will enable you to concentrate more effectively.

The colorful patterns also arise from the unconscious level of the mind. When you see them, focus your gaze by looking into the spiritual eye to see if they will converge to form one light that may be used for inward contemplation. Be more inclined to experience peace, clarity of awareness, and wholeness.

Subjective perceptions come and go; Self-knowledge is more satisfying and contributes to spiritual growth.

Explain how emotional maturity relates to spiritual growth.

When we are emotionally mature, we are inclined to think and act rationally, avoid inappropriate reactions to events that occur, and to be disciplined in our behaviors. Our powers of intellectual discernment are more accurate and we can choose to disregard false ideas or involvements which are useless in regard to our major purposes in life.

In chapter two of Patanjali's yoga-sutras, before meditation is explained, instruction in ideal behavior, lifestyle routines, and

disciplined practices is given. Think and behave like an emotionally mature person even though doing it may require thoughtfulness and effort.

I recently telephoned an ashram in a distant city to order a book. The woman who took my order spoke in a low, hushed, childlike voice as though dramatizing her devotion—a way of speaking that did not reflect emotional maturity.

Other than receiving instruction in meditation, when one is formally initiated into kriya yoga practices, what else is of value?

Of great value is one's commitment to be dedicated on the spiritual path. Also of great value is the connection that is made with an authentic teaching tradition and the lineage of gurus. Without such commitment, and attunement with the gurus, instruction is merely the transmission of information that may or may not be useful.

Not all who request initiation understand the significance of the occasion. Some individuals consider the experience as an interesting event in their lives rather than as an opportunity to learn how to experience rapid spiritual growth. Others are appreciative at the time of initiation, then go on to mix (and try to practice) what they learn with a variety of other systems that are promoted in the new age marketplace—then wonder why their spiritual progress is not satisfying.

Some friends know I have been initiated into kriya yoga and are curious about what I do and how they can perhaps also be initiated. What should I tell them?

Advise them to read *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living* or *The Path of Light* (or both books). They can then practice the preliminary meditation procedures to prepare for initiation.

Also, let your lifestyle, words, and behaviors demonstrate to them the usefulness of the kriya yoga path.

When I am engaged in ordinary activities and relationships, what can I do to nurture spiritual awareness?

Cultivate awareness of the presence of God at all times. Remember that you always abide in God whether or not you are aware of this fact. Because you abide in God (as a unit of God's being) you don't have to try to connect with God or to attract God's attention. God is a field of Consciousness in which everything exists and all events occur in orderly ways. Remember this and be established in soul-contentment.

The knowledge of our true nature in relationship with the Infinite that emerges at the conscious level of our awareness is referred to as "remembered knowledge" because it is innate to us and is being unveiled.

Cultivate peace of mind and cheerfulness. Now that you are on your spiritual path, live it efficiently. Effective living is yoga practice that is just as important as metaphysical study and meditation. Prosper: thrive, flourish, and in all ways be successful. When you live creatively and effectively you will be more insightful and meditation practice will be easier and more fruitful. Be happy.

When I am alone I am usually calm and self-controlled, but when I interact with others I tend to be superficial or erratic in regard to what I say and how I act. Why do I do this?

You know yourself and your personal history better than anyone. Ask yourself this question and observe your thoughts and feelings.

The problem may be due to your attempts to compensate for feelings of insecurity or lack of self-confidence, or a desire to please and be accepted by others. Cultivate self-confidence, remain calm and soul-centered, and think before you speak or act. Speak in a lower voice tone. Communicate your thoughts and intentions as clearly as possible by what you say and do.

I would like to have friends and family members be open to the path of kriya yoga. Only a few of them are aware of their spirituality; the others either do not believe in God or refuse to communicate on a deep spiritual level. Because of this, my ability to communicate with these people is limited. Please provide suggestions for invoking the openness of others.

Help others feel comfortable by communicating with them at their intellectual and emotional level rather than expecting them to be interested in your ideas and feelings. It was said of Sri Yukteswar that when he talked with his neighbors in his community that he did so at their level of interest. Those who were not aware of his spiritual stature considered him to be a friendly, courteous person. Paramahansa Yogananda was also able to interact with people at social gatherings in a friendly way which helped them to feel comfortable in his presence.

Just be your true Self and have harmonious relationships with family members and friends. Cultivate friendships with individuals who are more open to spiritual matters to satisfy your desire for such relationships—without being dependent on external support. The spiritual path is inward.

Explain more about how to be conscious of our true nature.

Our true nature is pure consciousness. When we think and feel that we are other than a unit of pure consciousness we tend to identify with an illusional (mistaken) sense of selfhood or ego-based personality. Self-realization results when our awareness is restored to its natural condition.

When we are egocentric and aspire to Self-realization, we may apply various methods that will, hopefully, facilitate our spiritual growth. Many sincere devotees are struggling to "become" Self-realized while not understanding that, at the core of their being, they are already knowledgeable and free.

In metaphysical literature, the word *Self* is used to define

the essence of being— which needs to be acknowledged and experienced as our real state. The word soul is used to define a unit of awareness which is not yet conscious of its essence because awareness is blurred and fragmented.

When the mind is calm and awareness is clear, the essence of our being is known and experienced (realized). We may then wonder why we formerly considered Self-realization to be so difficult to actualize.

Do not think that it will require many years or several incarnations of endeavor to be Self-realized. That which you are seeking, you already are. The higher Reality you desire to apprehend has ever been what it is. Continue to contemplate what is true. Discovery will occur in a flash of insight. You will be spiritually awake—liberated forever from erroneous ideas and illusions.

When rested by [kriya] pranayama practice, the nervous system is refreshed. If one daily rests the nervous system in this way, the physical body is vitalized. – *Swami Sri Yukteswar*

Meditation practice establishes inner balance, harmonizes the nervous system, purifies the mind, increases will power, and inspires constructive emotions. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

There is not in this world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual walk with God. Those only can comprehend it who practice and experience it. – *Brother Lawrence (1605 – 1691)*
The Practice of the Presence of God

News

More than 200 new initiates have been instructed in kriya yoga lifestyle and meditation practices since February—in Florida, New Mexico, Californi,a and at retreats at CSA headquarters.

2003 meditation seminars and kriya initiations. Donation basis.

Costa Mesa, California: Sunday, March 15, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Holiday Inn, 3131 South Bristol Street.

San Jose, California: Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Center for Spiritual Enlightenment, 1146 University Avenue.

Other locations will be announced when scheduled.

Did you participate in our free book distribution project during May and June? More than 26,000 books were distributed as of June 14 (as this issue of *Radiance* is being sent to the printer). A full report will be published in the August issue of the *CSA Newsletter*.

A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice was not included in the free book project announcements because it is for kriya initiates only. If you have friends or associates who are kriya initiates, request free copies of *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice* and give them this book. Request a copy for yourself if you do not already have one.

Pay only for packing and shipping. $2.00 for 1 copy, 30 cents for each additional copy.

Sitting in a [firm] meditation posture, the yogi should focus attention inward at the spiritual eye. By successful accomplishment, one experiences unqualified, pure happiness—therefore, this should be done with concentrated endeavor. – *Shiva Samhita*

Private Retreats At CSA Headquarters
For CSA Members and Kriya Initiates

Autumn 2002 Schedule

September 8-13 • September 15-20 • September 22-27

Limited to 20 participants.
Stay for one, two, or three weeks.

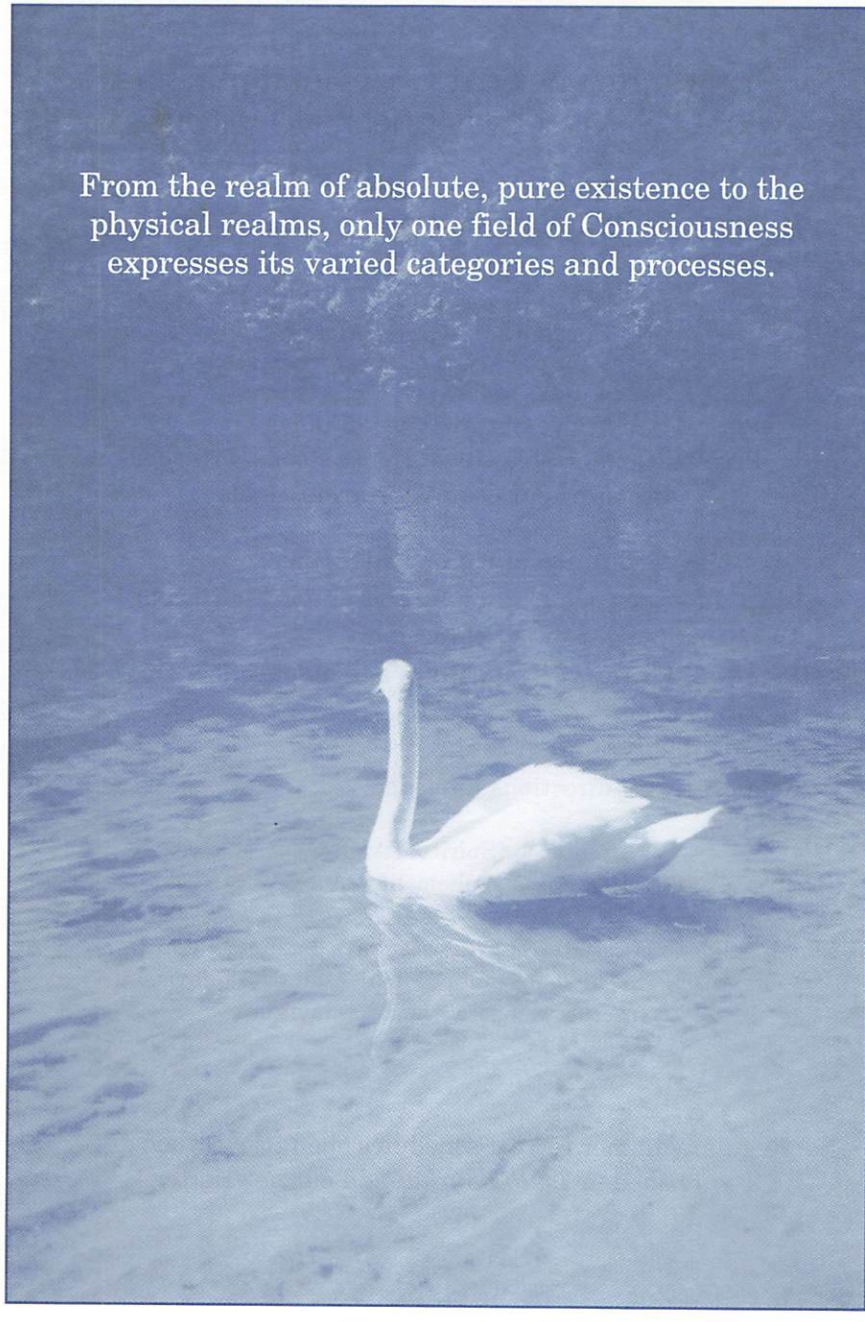
Arrive Saturday or Sunday.
Private, Comfortable Guest House Rooms Provided
Prepare Your Own Vegetarian Meals

- One Hour Meditation at 6 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Class on kriya yoga philosophy and practices at 7 a.m.
- Two hours of light work-service daily.
- Free time for rest, private study, and quiet reflection.
- Donation basis.
- Reservations required.
- Request travel directions if needed.

Center for Spiritual Awareness
P.O. Box 7 Lakemont, GA 30552

Telephone (706) 782-4723 weekdays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Fax (706) 782-4560 anytime E-mail csainc@csa-davis.org
Internet web site www.csa-davis.org

Regular summer retreat schedules open to everyone are published in *Truth Journal* and our newsletter.


From the realm of absolute, pure existence to the
physical realms, only one field of Consciousness
expresses its varied categories and processes.

RADIANCE

A Quarterly Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

January – March 2003

Meditation Temple Dedicated to Sri Yukteswar
Serampore, India

This ancient yoga (of knowledge and practice) is now declared by me to you, for you are my disciple and friend. This is indeed the supreme secret. – *Bhagavad Gita 4:3*

When rested by [kriya] pranayama practice, the nervous system is refreshed and the physical body is vitalized. – *Swami Sri Yukteswar*

God is revealed within when awareness is made pure by liberating it from all concepts of duality. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

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The Extent of Our Commitment to the Spiritual Path is Demonstrated By What We Do

Kriya yoga initiates should be more committed to right living and meditation practice than truth seekers who haven't yet acquired knowledge of how their spiritual potential can be fulfilled, I invite you to demonstrate your commitment to the fullest extent of which you are presently capable.

A Guide to Using the Enclosed Response Form

- If You Prefer to Be Removed From Our Mailing List, Let Us Know.
- *Back Issues of Radiance (free)*
- *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*
  Kriya pranayama and supplemental techniques are reviewed. Also, Patanjali's *yoga-sutras* with minimal commentary and the *Shandilya Upanishad*, a rare yoga scripture said by Babaji to have been written by an ancestor of Lahiri Mahasaya. Request a copy if you do not have it. Similar to *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living* in format.
- *CSA Membership (Donation Basis)*
  If you are not a member of Center for Spiritual Awareness, if you were initiated by me, you should be a member. You will receive *Truth Journal* four times a year and a *Studies in Truth* lesson monthly. Members who are kriya initiates also receive *Radiance* free.
- *Donation*
  If you are a CSA member or only subscribe to *Truth Journal* and/or *Radiance* and have not donated within the past 12 months, to continue receiving our publications on a regular schedule, make a donation now.

- *The Philosophy and Practices of Kriya Yoga* (free booklet)
  A sample is enclosed. If you already have a copy, give one to a friend. Request extra copies to give to others who may be interested in knowing about the kriya yoga tradition.

- *Printed Seminar Announcement Brochures & Posters*
  If you live in or near the cities where meditation seminars will be presented in January, February, and March, give brochures to interested persons and distribute them at bookstores and other places in your community. Posters are also available.

- *Questions, Inquiries, and Comments*
  Your participation in the dialogue section of *Radiance* will be helpful.

Note: If you want to volunteer your services at our meditation seminars, let me know. Ushers and literature attendants are always needed at these programs.

Meditation Retreats

See the back cover for schedules of private retreats for our members and kriya initiates. See the schedules in *Truth Journal* and our *Newsletter* for our regular meditation retreats offered from June to early autumn. You are cordially invited to participate.

Kriya yoga practice quickens spiritual evolution.
– Paramahansa Yogananda

Self-Evaluation for Kriya Initiates

Answer these questions when you are alone. If corrective actions are necessary, let your conscience guide you. If you need more knowledge, acquire it.

conscience Conformity to our sense of appropriate conduct.

1. I awaken each morning with thoughts of God and gurus in my mind. [ ] yes [ ] no

2. I read God-centered truth literature daily. {] yes [ ] no

3. I practice kriya yoga meditation routines on a regular, daily schedule. [ ] yes [ ] no

5. I regularly adhere to self-care regimens for my total health and well-being. [ ] yes [ ] no

6. I perform all of my duties skillfully, without attachment to them or their results. [ ] yes [ ] no

7. I acknowledge everyone with whom I relate and who I think about as divine beings. [ ] yes [ ] no

8. When relating to others, I am always courteous and my behaviors are appropriate to the situation. [ ] yes [ ] no

9. I am always optimistic, expecting ideal outcomes for all emerging events and circumstances. [ ] yes [ ] no

10. I am totally committed to the kriya yoga path and always do my best to live up to my innate potential. [ ] yes [ ] no

kriya Constructive action. **Yoga** Oneness, wholeness.

Dialogue

The Traditions, Philosophy & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Participate by providing your questions, inquiries, or comments for future issues. By mail, or e-mail csainc@csa-davis.org

When you were in India, did you meet any kriya yogis?

Several kriya initiates attended my lectures in New Delhi, Calcutta, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Pune, and Bombay. Most of them were members of Yogoda Satsanga, the Indian branch of Self-Realization Fellowship. A few had been initiated by Swami Hariharananda, a direct disciple of Sri Yukteswar (see the news section in this issue). Although I did not meet any gurus, there are kriya yoga centers in Bengal and elsewhere in India which are not publicized.

Everywhere I went, many people asked how they could be initiated. I privately initiated a few persons; some of them asked if I wanted to establish a kriya yoga ashram in India and offered to help make it possible. We have no plans at this time to establish a center there.

When will you again go to India? When you do go, can a group of CSA members who are kriya initiates also go?

I may return in late December 2003 or early January 2004 for three weeks, to offer meditation seminars and initiation in New Delhi, Bangalore, and Bombay. An announcement will be made when a schedule is finalized, perhaps in late spring. Kriya initiates will be welcome to go. Details will be provided. The schedule of the nine CSA members who went in October was planned to enable them to be in New Delhi, Calcutta, and Bangalore when I was there. While in Calcutta, they visited Paramahansa Yogananda's family home and a meditation temple dedicated to Sri Yukteswar (see front cover).

Paramahansa Yogananda referred to Babaji as a Mahavatar. Does this mean that Babaji is a full incarnation of God? Are any of the other gurus in our lineage avatars?

The idea that a physical embodiment of unrestricted divine knowledge and power occurs from time to time is based more on wishful thinking than on facts. Many individuals who are said to be such manifestations obviously are not free from restrictions and their abilities are limited—which would not be so if they were indeed full incarnations of God. Many devotees like to think that their spiritual role models came directly from the realm of God, yet an examination of their human history reveals that they had to learn how to unfold their innate abilities and overcome obstacles just as we do.

Paramahansaji referred to Babaji as a *maha* (great) *avatar* (embodiment of divine qualities) because of Babaji's advanced degree of spiritual enlightenment. He also referred to Lahiri Mahasaya as a *yogavatar* (incarnation of yogic attainment) and to Sri Yukteswar as a *jnanavatar* (incarnation of spiritual knowledge). Some of Paramahansaji's disciples refer to him as a *premavatar* (incarnation of divine love). The descriptive terms are used to acknowledge the obvious characteristics of these gurus. All souls, as units of one field of supreme Consciousness, have the same innate divine qualities. Our salvation (permanent freedom from restrictions which are caused by lack of spiritual knowledge) will be the result of our own awakening to Self- and God-realization.

Several religious traditions teach that a messiah, a God-sent person who will remove human ignorance and suffering from the world will eventually appear. When and where this is supposed to occur, no one knows. Human ignorance and suffering will only be banished when more people become knowledgeable and their divine qualities are freely expressive.

When I recently browsed the Internet, I found several web sites

with information about Babaji. What about the information provided on these sites?

It is inaccurate because based on unenlightened thinking. The individuals who offer their opinions about Babaji on an Internet web site would be better off if they devoted their thoughts and actions to purposeful living and spiritual practice. When I was in India in October, I met three people who informed me that they had recently met, and talked with, Babaji in the Himalayas. Most of what they said about the experiences they claimed to have had seemed more like fantasy than fact and they seemed, to me, to be emotionally immature.

Many of Paramahansa Yogananda's disciples (and others who did not meet him but consider themselves to be his disciple) say that he guides their lives and provides them with personal instruction. Do you believe this?

No. Paramahansaji left this realm fifty years ago. Many people like to think and feel that he is providing them with opportunities, arranging circumstances to challenge them to grow, and impressing their minds with his thoughts.

In a back issue of Radiance magazine you mentioned that you are Paramahansa Yogananda's only guru-successor. Please provide more information to clarify this matter?

The word *guru* means "teacher." Just as Paramahansaji was one of Sri Yukteswar's disciples who taught and transmitted the unique spiritual energy influence of our lineage of gurus, as a disciple of Paramahansaji, I also do it as he told me to do when he ordained me in 1951. At that time he said to me, "Teach as I have taught ... and initiate devotees of God into kriya yoga." When a brother disciple who was present asked, "Sir, is Roy to initiate others?", our guru replied, "You, too, should do it. The same God who is in me is in you! What I have done, you should

do." That disciple (Herbert Freed) made his transition many years ago, as have all of my other brother and sister disciples whom Paramahansaji authorized as teachers of this kriya yoga tradition. The few direct disciples who are still embodied and who teach, do so as "representatives" of this tradition rather than as gurus or teachers. They were either not authorized by Paramahansaji to be gurus or they do not think or feel that they are qualified to teach from their own understanding and realization. When they initiate others, they tell the new initiates to consider Paramahansaji as their guru. That is one reason why so many people feel that they have to rely on, or hope to have, telepathic contact with him. Their endeavors to do this can, and often do, result in fantasy. For this kriya yoga tradition to remain vital, there must always be embodied gurus to teach and initiate. If a person who thinks that telepathic guidance is being received from a disembodied teacher will rationally analyze it, it will be discovered to be a product of their imagination or wishful thinking. The practical advantage of having a guru who is in this world is that useful information can be directly communicated. Some "devotees" prefer to imagine that a disembodied person is their guru because doing so enables them to follow their own "guidance." Others persist in this mistaken belief because they are not yet willing to grow to emotional and spiritual maturity.

When I meditate, I have difficulty getting my thoughts to settle down. I've tried several mantras, without much success. What else can I do to calm my mind?

Rather than be preoccupied with your thoughts, detach your attention from them by 1) being Self-aware or 2) concentrating on something that is of interest. Either way is useful for meditation practice. Random thought processes are caused by impulses (*vasanas*) from subconscious and unconscious levels of the mind. When they are ignored and attention is directed elsewhere by choice, they become weak and eventually subside.

When nurturing Self-awareness or concentrating on a chosen object (God, light, Om, a mantra, pranayama, or other technique practice), do it with devotion (fervent aspiration supported by intention to accomplish your aim). You will then be able to meditate effectively and have satisfying results. Meditation, without devotion and intention to accomplish the purpose of practice, may be merely a mechanical exercise. Paramahansa Yogananda often reminded his disciples: "Devotion is more important than [a] meditation technique; however, together, they make an unbeatable combination."

Also experiment by sometimes sitting longer than you usually sit. Watch and wait. You will occasionally experience spontaneous adjustments of mental states, clear states of awareness, and interludes of serene peacefulness.

I have noticed that some teachers in our kriya tradition teach the practice of kriya pranayama a little differently than the way you teach it.

I teach it as I learned it from Paramahansaji, with emphasis on procedures that produce the best results. Variations that may be taught by other gurus are minor. The most useful procedure is to pull the current up into the spiritual eye (front region of the brain) with inhalation and let it flow back through the upper brain and down through the spine to the base chakra with exhalation. When this can easily be done, some kriya yogis like to chant mantras (Om or *bija* [seed] mantras) at the chakras when the current is ascending and descending. Seed mantras are said to have an energy frequency that enlivens the chakras. Most new initiates find that trying to chant mantras at the chakras while doing the pranayama routine prevents them from being fully aware of the flow of the current. When concluding the pranayama routine, pull the current up to the spiritual eye and crown chakra and hold it there. Exhale, and disregard the breathing. Sit in the tranquil silence for a while. Later, when inclined to do so, prac-

tice jyoti mudra, and again sit in the silence, listening to Om.

A CSA meditation group is not available in my town. I sometimes attend sessions offered by devotees of another yoga tradition. Is this all right to do?

If your participation at the those group sessions does not cause thoughts or feelings of confusion, it is all right. If confusion results, or you become distracted from your personal practices, participation should be discontinued.

Although I enjoy meditation practice when I do it, I am inclined to neglect it. How can I motivate myself to practice meditation on a regular schedule?

It will be easier for you to adhere to a regular schedule of meditation when you consider it to be your spiritual duty.

There seems to be a great "distance" between my present state of awareness and where I want to be. I fervently aspire to be Self- and God-realized. How can I quicken my spiritual growth?

Use your powers of discriminative intelligence to discern the essence of what you are as a spiritual being and endeavor to actualize your divine qualities. Maintain a wholesome, balanced lifestyle. Meditate regularly. Improve your understanding of your Self, God, and your relationship to the one field of Consciousness. Read about kriya yoga practices in chapter two of *Patanjali's yoga-sutras*.

Book Excerpt

Life Surrendered in God

From the first section of the book, now being revised for publication later this year by CSA Press.

At our deepest level of being, behind the screen of mind and personality, is the pure, immortal, true Self we are. It is now what it has ever been and will ever be: pure, clear, bright, and complete. The Self we are, is God as us. When we see the world through purified senses and flawlessly comprehend what is examined, we experience peace of soul and express health, harmony, and right action in all circumstances. We understand the rhythms and cycles of the universe and are able to skillfully perform our duties without attachment to them or to their results. We can then function within the field of time while grounded in the Infinite.

Discipleship is easy for the surrendered devotee. It can be difficult for the unsurrendered. Even when we sincerely want to be surrendered, we may have difficulty. The spirit may be willing, but the flesh may be weak; our aspiration may be authentic, but habits and mental conditionings may yet be influential. We may desire God-realization and have only a few personal restrictions, but be emotionally immature.

To Have Real Purpose in Life and Unfold Soul Capacities, Do These Things

To experience relative and absolute fulfillment, come to terms with life in relationship to your basic soul inclinations.

Fulfill Your Duties and Be Happy. Examine your basic personality characteristics, skills, and abilities to help you determine your role in life. Then cheerfully fulfill your personal duties while cultivating the virtues and living a moral life.

Provide a secure basis for your life and for your spiritual practices by *satisfying of your legitimate needs and desires*. Housing, clothing, food, emotional support, supportive relationships, and ability to creatively express will liberate your mind from anxiety and provide opportunities to become cultured as well as to fulfill higher aspirations. Emotional conflicts will be removed as you learn to function freely. Be comfortable, without attachments.

Be prosperous by harmoniously integrating the spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, and environmental aspects of your life. You should be able to easily have whatever you need to accomplish your worthwhile purposes. An understanding relationship with the world is an indication of psychological health, which is necessary for success on the spiritual path. Whatever your role in life, so long as you are fulfilling your destined purposes you should be prosperous to the extent needed to fulfill those purposes.

Remain focused on the aim of God-realization. While attending to basic matters, attend to your spiritual practices, yearning always for God-realization. To attend to outer needs while neglecting spiritual growth is to miss the mark in life. Responsible living provides the foundation for spiritual growth; spiritual awareness enables the fulfillment of personal obligations and the achievement of goals to be accomplished more easily and efficiently.

Philosophy, Religion, and Revealed Truth

Philosophy, the love of and endeavor to acquire wisdom has three branches: natural, moral, and metaphysical. Diligent investigation should result in complete understanding of the subject. Philosophical inquiry can proceed by analytical examination using of the faculty of intelligence. Until our intuitive powers are highly developed, conclusions arrived at by a reasoning process will be incomplete. Intellectual and mental powers are

limited; awakened intuition makes possible direct perception of the truth of what is observed.

Using mental faculties, we can speculate about our relationship with the world and God. This can be the first step to acquiring knowledge that can make possible examination of inner causes of outer effects. The study of physics (the laws of nature) can awaken a desire to know the operations of the subjective side of life. Philosophical inquiry can motivate us to engage in spiritual practices. For one who is sincerely intent on discovery, all valid questions can be answered and all correctly stated problems can be solved. Philosophical inquiry should lead to contemplation and contemplation should lead to insight. This is the desired end of philosophical inquiry.

The religious impulse is innate to the soul and causes everyone to sooner or later desire to know the meaning of life and to be Self- and God-realized. People whose awareness is ordinary (modified) are usually preoccupied with thoughts and actions related to physical survival and maintenance of the personality, little knowing that inner changes are occurring which will one day result in spiritual awakening.

Various philosophical views have been offered in an attempt to explain the religious impulse. A primitive view is that it began to emerge when early man wanted to know the meaning of his dreams or of the forces of nature. A popular psychological opinion, propounded several decades ago and still believed by many, is that man turns to religion because of a need to resolve neurotic conflicts. Not being able to resolve such conflicts, one is inclined to look outward and project an external object—God as a parent figure but omnipotent and omnipresent—as a substitute for a physical father or mother. This theory has it that only neurotic people are religious; that when they resolve their psychological conflicts they will no longer need their imagined god. This view does not explain why healthy-minded, happy people also desire to know the meaning of life and the reality of God.

Mystical experiences are unlike ordinary perceptions. Their characteristics indicate that something more than effects of personal causes are present. Besides the uniqueness of degrees of transcendence, there are three other possible characteristics. 1) An authentic mystical experience involves a response of one's total being—it is a complete experience. 2) It is more intense and "real" than experiences at ordinary levels of human consciousness. 3) It involves an imperative to act. When such an episode is experienced, we have no doubt that something exceptional and useful has occurred, and we are impelled to behave in accord with higher values. Results vary with individuals. Some are left with a tangible awareness of the presence of a benevolent power. Some experience varying degrees of ecstasy. Others may experience degrees of insight into life processes and knowledge of subtle realms. These three results may occur together.

While we may, or may not, choose to associate with a traditional, organized religious activity, if we are responsive to the soul urge to unfold, we cannot deny our religious impulse. We may then pursue religious or mystical experience with or without formal affiliation with group activities or rituals.

Participation at religious gatherings temporarily meets the emotional and spiritual needs of some people. They may also derive encouragement and acquire a reasonable philosophical education. Within the framework of traditional religious observances a resolved devotee can privately pursue metaphysical studies as well as participate in meaningful devotional routines. Religious practices differ in accord with the psychological characteristics of individuals. It is common to feel most comfortable with a religious philosophy which agrees with our personal views or satisfies our soul needs.

Behind all authentic religious-philosophical views and practices is the essence which provides the inspiration and spiritual nourishment; it is this with which we should choose to identify. While respecting all inspired traditions, a devotee should pur-

sue the inner way of surrender in God and righteous living.

The eternal way is known wherever it is self-revealed through conscious individuals; it was not created nor can it be possessed by any person or group. In our current era, this knowledge dawned in India and, from there, has extended throughout the world.

The Major Problem and the Only Solution

Why, since at the core of our being, knowledge of what we are in relationship to God exists, is this not always known at the surface of our awareness? Identified with a mind and body, the soul falsely presumes itself to be a mind-body creature. Inclined to express, spiritually unawake souls endeavor to satisfy their needs only in the objective realms, thus creating more complications and confusion.

Central to enlightenment traditions is the teaching that we need to return our attention to the source, to God, and the unmanifest field of pure consciousness. How is this done? Beginning where we are, firmly resolved, imbued with faith, we enter into a process of psychological transformation and spiritual growth. Three steps are essential to this process—*repentance*, *commitment*, and *right practice*.

To *repent* is to admit our shortcomings and turn to God. To be *committed* is to be firmly decided on a constructive course of action. To *practice* is to adjust behavior so that we are able to live according to our aspiration and commitment.

Without repentance, commitment, and right practice, discipleship is impossible. Without *repentance*, we remain as we are until forced by circumstances or the grace of God to change. Without *commitment* there will be no focus, no direction of attention, or definite sense of purpose. Without *right practice*, knowledge which can only result from experience will be absent. These three steps are the great essentials for spiritual growth. If they cannot be accepted, one cannot be a disciple. To pretend to be a disciple without surrendering to them is to be dishonest. To refuse to be

a disciple is to remain in a condition of spiritual ignorance. There is no possibility of spiritual growth without discipleship and no progress without surrender and practice. Grace can intervene and cause a conversion experience, but this is rare. In the course of time, the force of evolution will result in gradual spiritual awakening. For people burdened with the weight of mental and emotional conflicts, only *repentance*, *commitment*, and *right practice* affords them the way to knowledge and freedom.

For the surrendered devotee, the enlightenment path is enjoyable, even though sometimes difficult. It is enjoyable because of ever-new episodes of learning and spontaneous discovery. It can sometimes be difficult because of the tenacity of ingrained habits and tendencies. For the unsurrendered but curious seeker, the path is challenging because of resistance to learning and following through with necessary procedures to modify behavior. Some behaviors can be modified to allow conformance to the supportive influences of grace; some behaviors will change spontaneously as a result of soul unfoldment.

It is important to remember that spiritual growth can occur while we remain true to our calling in life: the role we play because it is our duty or our service-oriented activity. So long as our lifestyle is wholesome and constructive, we can continue while deepening our spiritual practices. We do not have to withdraw from the world to grow spiritually. We only have to see the world in a new and better way, give attention to important matters, and abstain from relationships and involvements which are not worthy of us; which are in no way useful to us or to the wellness of society or the planet.

The Guru-Disciple Relationship: Its Value and Requirements

The *guru* is the "light" (*ru*) which removes "darkness" (*gu*). God is the real guru. Because very few disciples are able to succeed on the enlightenment path without assistance, an embod-

ied teacher is helpful. A *Satguru* is a "truth teacher" who is permanently established in truth-knowledge (*sat*).

From the guru, a disciple learns philosophical concepts and specific procedures to be used to remove obstacles to spiritual growth. The guru is also the vehicle through which spiritual forces are transmitted which contribute to a disciple's soul awakening and support their spiritual practices.

To seek a guru relationship before being adequately prepared will either be fruitless or disappointing. The student must be prepared for discipleship if instructions are to be understood and the transmission of grace is to occur. The four qualifications of discipleship are:

Reasonable intelligence. Even devotees who do not engage in deep study of philosophical subjects must have a degree of intelligence in order to discern their own inner changes and the subtle superconscious states which unfold. The exercise of intelligence initially enables a devotee to partially discern the fact that the relative realms are transitory and there must be a changeless and permanent *something* which is their cause and support.

Renunciation. As a result of discernment, the devotee is able to understand that nothing in the relative spheres can long endure. One is then able to relate intelligently to the world without being attached to things or experiences. Even actions judged to be good—such as charitable works, philosophical study, performance of duty, and religious ritual—are finite, as are their effects. Enlightenment is not the effect of any mundane cause; it is only indirectly related to relationships and behavior. Wholesome relationships and appropriate behavior contribute to mental and emotional poise and harmony with the environment, thus removing barriers to clear perception and focused spiritual practice. Human happiness is often the direct result of our actions; God-realization is more likely when actions have ceased. Since we cannot avoid necessary actions which are essential to our well-being and the performance of accepted duties, we can be in the

world but "not of it" while fulfilling our obligations.

Yearning for liberation. The primary desire of the heart (soul) is to awaken in God. When we yearn for liberation of consciousness and help ourselves to the extent that we can, soul forces are enlivened, spiritual progress is more rapid, and we attract to ourselves supportive circumstances that assist us to final freedom in God.

An ethical foundation. The following "six treasures" form the basis of righteous living. Their practice prepares the inner faculties for the cultivation of higher knowledge and Self-realization. 1) *Calmness* as a result of soul-awareness and trust in God. Having faith in the teachings and trust in God, one can be calm regardless of outer or inner circumstances. 2) *Self-control*, essential for mastery of thoughts, feelings, and sensory urges. 3) When calm and self-controlled, the devotee becomes *settled in the Self.* 4) Thus poised, the devotee is able to *endure changing conditions* with perfect detachment. 5) *Concentration* is now possible, for the purpose of achieving worthy goals and success in meditation practice. 6) *Constant yearning* to know God should prevail until perceptions are flawless.

Hearing, *reflection*, and *meditation practice* are the three disciplines for the dedicated disciple. When hearing the words of the guru the disciple should retain them in memory and reflect upon them until knowledge is comprehended.

How does one who is sincere on the enlightenment path find the guru? The first step is preparation. The universal law of correspondences is that when our desires conform to our receptivity, life presents us with our heart's desire. If the devotee has never had a guru relationship he will be led to the one that best suits his needs and the relationship will persist until the disciple experiences liberation of consciousness. It may be that the disciple will be led to renew a relationship which was started in a prior incarnation and meet with the guru again, or be led to one of the guru's representatives if the guru is not accessible. If

neither the guru or a disciple-representative are available, the seeker will be led to a qualified teacher who will provide necessary instruction and encouragement.

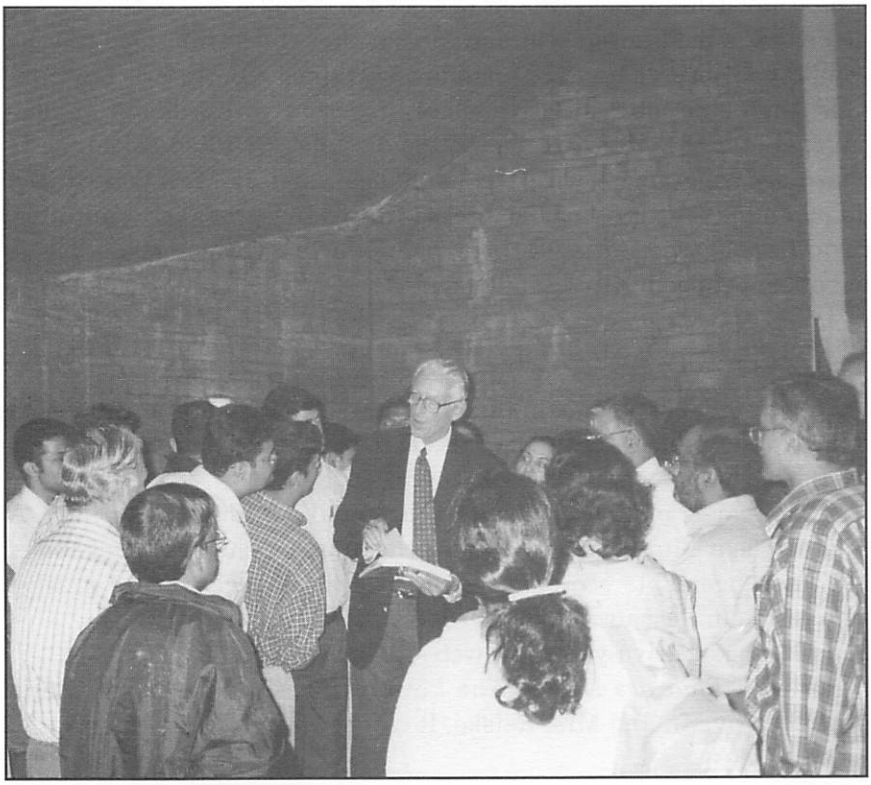
The true guru is God. A disciple should not attempt to overly personalize the guru relationship, find fault with the guru, or ignore the guru's instructions. The guru has already been through human conditions and is no longer interested in such matters. Paramahansaji often said, "I am not the guru. God is the guru; I am only his servant. Some Western philosophers, lacking understanding, have said that truth students in the West cannot accept a guru-disciple relationship because their self-reliant attitude is incompatible with having to surrender individualism; therefore, perhaps another path is better for them. The illusional sense of selfhood must be surrendered if Self-realization is to be experienced. Thousands of kriya yogis in the West are proof that surrender in God is the way to inner peace and God-realization.

* *

The learning process is still relatively slow because we are in the dawning of an awakening era and the majority of the world's population is still involved with egocentric, materialistic concerns. There has been more change in the direction of higher values in the last two hundred years than in the preceding two thousand years, and the process is speeding up. Perhaps one person in a thousand is today sincerely asking: Who am I? What is my source? What is the reason for my presence in the world? How can I know the truth?

We cannot understand what we are not capable of comprehending. This is why initial inquiry into the nature of God and the processes of life must be followed by metaphysical study and personal practice. Until we are fully involved with useful procedures we need frequent reminding. This is also why it is important today to spread by all available means, beginning with our own personal example to others, a *quantity* message of hope and

faith to provide responsive souls with accurate information and encourage their spiritual education. From among those who are assisted in practical ways and are spiritually educated, some will be receptive to higher teachings and become disciples on the enlightenment path. This is the *quality* work. Both learning opportunities should be offered to serve the needs of everyone.



Autographing books and discussing meditation practices after a lecture at the Ramana Maharishi Shrine in Bangalore, India.
October 13, 2002

News

Swami Harihara nanda, a disciple of Swami Sri Yukteswar, left his body on December 3 at 6:48 p.m. in south Florida. He was initiated by Sri Yukteswar in 1932, given advanced kriya yoga meditation instruction by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1935, and was later the director of Sri Yukteswar's ashram in Puri for many years. In 1949 Paramahansaji authorized him to initiate others.

From the late 1960s, Swami Harihara nanda traveled widely, teaching in India, Europe, South America, and the United States. I visited him at his ashram near Miami in February 2002 while in the area to present at a meditation seminar. At that time, I was informed that he would soon observe his 95th birthday. We talked quietly for a few minutes, then enjoyed meditative silence together with some of his disciples. Later that day, I met with his disciples who had asked me to share my experiences with Paramahansaji and James Lynn (Rajasi Janakandna). At that time I expressed my feelings that kriya initiates, regardless of who initiated them, should acknowledge each other as members of one spiritual family.

2003 Meditation Seminars & Retreats

Plan now to participate in the programs of your choice. If you live in or near where seminars will be offered, inform your spiritually inclined friends about them.

A seminar is planned in London, England, on Sunday, April 27. A seminar near Munich, Germany, is scheduled for the first weekend of May. Arrangements are being made by Harald and Marlies Reiske, who reside in Passau. Tel: (0851) 54283.
e-mail: reiske@kriya-yoga.de web site: kriya-yoga.de

My book *Pfad des Lichts* (The Path of Light) was translated and published by Mr. and Mrs. Reiske. It can be obtained from them.

Preliminary samadhi states are mixed with thoughts and feelings. When awareness is clarified, the reality of the true Self is revealed.

– Patanjali's yoga-sutras 1:46,47

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Holiday Inn, 4321 North Central Avenue

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
Friday, January 31, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Radisson Hotel, 415 North Monroe Street

*ORLANDO, FLORIDA
Sunday, February 2, 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Holiday Inn Downtown, 304 West Colonial Drive

DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA
Sunday, February 9, 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Unity of Delray Beach
101 Northwest 22nd Street

*COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA
Sunday, March 16, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Holiday Inn, 3131 South Bristol Street

*SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA
Saturday, March 22, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Center for Spiritual Enlightenment
1146 University Avenue

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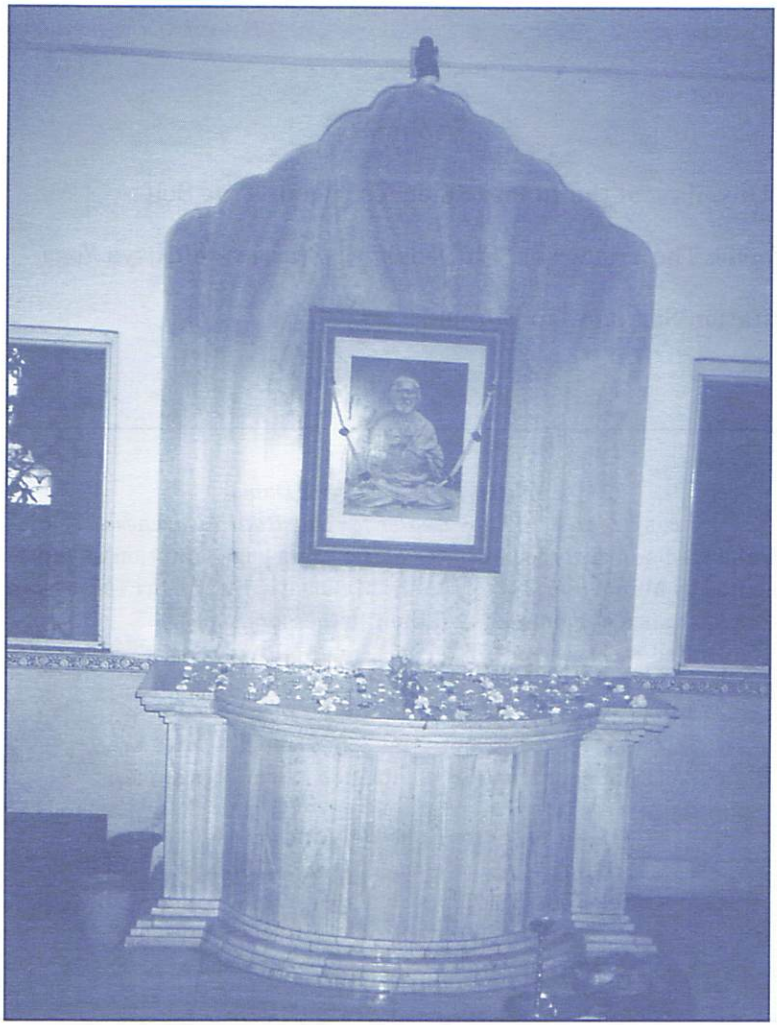
RADIANCE

A Quarterly Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

April – June 2003



Interior of Meditation Temple Dedicated to Sri Yukteswar
Serampore, India

There is nothing in the world that purifies like God-knowledge. That devotee who is perfected in yoga, in the course of time discovers that knowledge in the Self. – *Bhagavad Gita 4:38*

As the sun appears after darkness is banished by the dawn, so the Self appears when ignorance is banished by knowledge. – *Adi Shankara*

The superior, constructive influences of [superconscious] samadhi effectively eliminates restrictive subliminal tendencies.

– *Patanjali's yoga-sutras 3:9*

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Written by Roy Eugene Davis

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The Unveiling of the Innate Splendor of Your True Self

Innate soul qualities spontaneously emerge as conditions which confine them are weakened and removed. This is why refinement of the physical body and purification of the mind and intellect are emphasized as essential spiritual practices.

The physical body is refined by wholesome, orderly living, drinking pure water, breathing pure air, nutritious foods, and kriya yoga meditation practice.

The mind is purified by rational thinking, the cultivation of emotional stability, and superconscious influences that prevail during and after meditation. The purifying influences of superconscious forces and the liberated soul impulses that become expressive are referred to as redemptive actions of grace which can accomplish for us what we cannot accomplish by our personal efforts.

The intellect is purified by frequent practice of meditative, superconscious samadhi and discriminative analysis of what is observed. Improved powers of intellectual discernment, and of intuition, enable the ordinary sense of selfhood (ego) to be discerned for what it is—an illusion that results when the truth about ourselves is not accurately perceived. When this common error in perception is corrected, our awareness, no longer blurred and fragmented, can be restored to its original wholeness and our innate Self-knowledge can be immediately actualized. *Unless this key to Self-knowledge is understood, even the most sincere devotee on the spiritual path may be inclined to struggle for many years to attain an enlightened state which is actually present to be realized (known and experienced) at any moment.*

When souls are individualized because of interactions that occur between the field of supreme Consciousness and Om, the

vibration of its projected power, they assume an illusional sense of independent existence and become involved with the field of primordial nature (Om with attributes of space, time, and fine cosmic forces). When they become identified with the realms of Cosmic Mind and causal, astral, and physical realms they mistakenly presume themselves to be mental, causal, astral, or physical beings instead of units of pure consciousness which are only relating to those conditions.

How do you view yourself?

- Do you think of yourself as a human being with aspirations to become spiritually awake?—Or do you know that you are a spiritual being expressing through a mind and physical body?
- How do you usually think, feel, and function? Are you a creature of habit, with your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors determined by subconscious states or whims?—Or are you Self-aware and Self-determined?
- Are you hoping to someday be spiritually awake?—Or are you firmly resolved to be spiritually enlightened as soon as possible?
- If you consider yourself to be firmly resolved to be spiritually enlightened as soon as possible, are your thoughts, feelings, and actions in accord with your resolve?
- Do you wake up each day with thoughts of God and the gurus in your mind?
- Do you view each day as being replete (abundantly filled) with opportunities for learning, creatively expressing, and awakening to higher levels of understanding?
- Can you see with your mind's eye and with soul perception the possibilities before you to be explored?
- Are you devoted to the kriya yoga path (to living in the highest and best way so that each day you are more conscious and functional than you were the day before)?
- Do you meditate every day until you are superconscious?
- Do you read words of truth every day?

- Do you actively support our ministry services and projects to the fullest extent of your means and ability?

At the core of your being, you want to be fully awake. Do what can be done to refine your body and purify your mind and intellect. Rapid spiritual progress will occur. I often heard Paramahansa Yogananda say, "Quicken your spiritual evolution by concentrating on essentials and avoiding nonessentials. What might otherwise require many years to accomplish can then be realized in the present incarnation."

A person who recently requested to be removed from our mailing list wrote: "There are only so many ways to say what you write about." Although I always emphasize the basic truths, we need to be reminded of them until we are able to actually "hear" them and experience a shift of viewpoint that enables us to experience them for ourselves.

March 9 was the anniversary of the seventy-second year of my present incarnation. I have been studying and practicing kriya yoga for fifty-three years and, because of my persistent endeavors and God's grace, I am still learning and growing.

Until we completely transcend the realm of nature which is continuously changing, our opportunities to learn and grow are endless. Consider your sojourn in space and time as a great adventure. Make the most of your opportunities.

Ignorance is erroneously believing what is not true. Because of ignorance, one is inclined to believe that the material world alone exists—to forget that this realm is a mere play [of cosmic forces] occurring within the field of supreme Consciousness. – *Swami Sri Yukteswar*

Participate by sending your questions, inquiries, or comments to the CSA mailing address, or e-mail **csainc@csa-davis.org**

If I am Self- and God-realized in this incarnation, will I be Self- and God-realized if I have a future incarnation?

If realization is flawless, it will persist. If realization is not flawless when departing from this realm, one may continue to awaken in astral or causal realms or experience a temporary return to conditioned states of awareness. For this reason, it is important to be fully Self- and God-realized before leaving the body. No real spiritual gain is permanently lost. If one temporarily falls back into ordinary states of awareness, the previous realizations will be reclaimed. The constructive tendencies that have been acquired will impel one to aspire to complete liberation of consciousness, and to accomplish it.

Did we have goals or objectives before we incarnated?

Some souls have specific goals to achieve before they are incarnated. Most souls incarnate because they are somewhat confused. Their awareness is blurred and fragmented and they are attracted to the physical realm because of their desires and inclinations. Even enlightened saints who live in the physical realm for many years are sometimes reluctant to leave it because they have become used to being here. Sri Yukteswar said that this mild reluctance to depart is similar to that of a caged bird or animal that, when offered its freedom, may not want to leave the confinement of the cage to which it has become adapted. The most compelling urge that inclines souls to learn and acquire experience is the innate desire to be fully awake.

When we are spiritually enlightened, can we create universes as God does?

When we are spiritually enlightened we experience our true relationship with God. We do not have the power to create a universe or to individualize souls. We are units of one field of supreme Consciousness until we transcend this condition. When individuality is transcended, it is like a bubble in the ocean ceasing to be a bubble of the ocean.

If we don't need to reincarnate, can we choose to return to help others?

Some souls return to help others because 1) it is their destiny to do so; 2) their compassion or sentimental feelings incline them to do it; 3) they feel it to be their duty. To want to come back to help others may be a noble impulse, but it may also interfere with one's one spiritual progress. It is better to awaken to liberation of consciousness before considering a return to this realm to help others. What then happens will be in accord with the Divine will (intention).

Do evil entities exist? If so, can they influence us?

An edition of Webster's Dictionary defines "evil" as that which is morally wrong or which causes injury, ruin, or pain. The word is related to the words *up* and *over* and to the prefix *hypo* (under, beneath). The basic sense of the word, which is no longer used, probably meant "exceeding proper bounds" or "overreaching," and did not signify the absence of good. Today, however, it is common to hear people refer to evil as a negative force or power that is in a contest with a "good" force or power.

There are individuals whose actions cause misfortune for themselves and for others who are influenced by them. There is no need to be concerned about the intentions or actions of disembodied "entities" and the misguided intentions or actions of oth-

ers who are in this world need not overly influence us. When we are established in Self-awareness and engaged in purposeful actions we are inclined to experience supportive circumstances. There is no need to pray for protection from "evil" influences; the belief that this is necessary may cause mental and emotional conflicts that interfere with well-being and spiritual growth.

Are vitamin supplements of benefit?

Vitamin supplementation can be helpful when nutritional needs are not adequately provided by foods. Many vegetables and fruits available at food markets were grown in soils that were deficient in minerals. Some have residues of pesticides and should be washed well or peeled before eaten.

Since your guru's transition, do you communicate with him? Have you had other teachers or mentors?

I have not had direct communication with my guru since he left this realm. I have had dreams of him from time to time and a sense of inner guidance. Before he departed, he advised me to stay in tune with the gurus (their state of consciousness) as a way to remain in tune with God. He also encouraged me to persist in accomplishing my own liberation of consciousness. My last conversation with him was at his desert retreat house in Twenty Nine Palms, California, a few weeks before he left his body in Los Angeles on March 7, 1952. I am thankful that he helped me to be self-reliant and assured me that I would fulfill my spiritual destiny. I cannot describe with mere words his positive, enduring influence on my life.

In chapter 26 (The Science of Kriya Yoga) in Autobiography of a Yogi, *Patanjali is quoted: Liberation is possible by stopping the course of inhalation and exhalation. During meditations, I have been experimenting with the breathless state. Will this eventually prove to be useful? In a past issue of* Radiance *I read the quota-*

tion: "To one who has mastered breathlessness, there is nothing unattainable in the three worlds. What are the "three worlds"?

Although breathing may occasionally stop when life forces are withdrawn into the higher brain, the state to which yogis refer is usually one of deep relaxation when breathing is slow and shallow. This condition is accompanied by emotional peace and mental calmness that allows clear awareness to prevail.

When meditating, notice that when breathing stops or is very subtle, thoughts are either absent or weak. After kriya pranayama practice, or when inclined to do so, inhale a little, exhale and pause without inhaling. When not breathing, notice that it is easier to be aware in the moment without the support of feelings or thoughts. With practice, you will be able to assume this thought-free state of clear awareness at will when breathing is normal though subtle. You will be able to choose to be superconscious at all times when engaged in ordinary activities.

The "three worlds" are physical, astral, and causal which comprise the manifest realm in which cosmic forces exist. By removing awareness from them, transcendence is realized. When their processes are known, we can express freely in them and accomplish useful purposes. At the physical level we perform physical actions to accomplish purposes. When we constructively use imagination to accomplish purposes, we influence astral (mental and energetic) forces. When we are Self-aware and intend for events to occur or accept them as being our right to have or experience, we function at the causal level. When we have knowledge of subtle realms and natural laws of cause and effect, it is easier to function skillfully and effectively.

I have had some dreams that alerted me of future events. Can you comment on this?

When our awareness is not confined by the senses, it is possible to have precognitive insights when we are awake and when

we dream. Not all dreams are related to the future; it is more usual that they occur when memories of perceptions are being processed and organized by the brain and mind. I, too, have had previews of future events while dreaming, although I usually "just know" the trend of events when I am awake.

Describe Paramahansa Yogananda's "energization exercises" and how to do them.

See page 85 in *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*.

These exercises, innovated by Paramahansaji before he came to America, can be used to vitalize the body and improve and maintain muscle tone. He had a keen interest in methods that contributed (or might contribute) to health and well-being. One of elder his brothers, Bishnu Ghosh, established several physical culture centers in India during the early decades of the last century.

Does spiritual enlightenment occur as a sudden revelation, or gradually over a period of time? What can be done to quicken the awakening process?

It can occur suddenly or it may emerge gradually. To more quickly awaken to Self- and God-realization, attend to kriya yoga practices as described in Patanjali's yoga-sutras. Kriya yoga practice includes more than meditation. In the first and second verses of chapter two, kriya yoga practice is described as "austerity (disciplined thinking and behavior), study (of our true nature and higher realities), and surrender to (in) God" that removes all obstacles to Self-realization.

When practicing kriya pranayama, should I visualize the flow of current? I have difficulty visualizing where it should go.

Although you should have an understanding of where the current is to flow, concentrate on "feeling" it flow up from the

base of the spine to the higher brain as you inhale, then "feel" it flow down when you exhale. Feeling the current as it moves up and down is more important than mentally picturing its flow. You will acquire proficiency by regular practice.

After practicing, sit longer in the silence with awareness at the spiritual eye and higher brain, alert and attentive.

When I practice kriya pranayama, my attention is not always completely involved with it. What can I do to concentrate more effectively during my practice?

Stay focused at the spiritual eye and higher brain while feeling the current move up and down. To more fully involve your attention, mentally chant "Om" or "God" with inhalation and exhalation as the current flows up and down. Feel that you are meditating *in* God.

Explain more about discipleship and what it involves.

The usual definition of the word *disciple* is "student," one who is intent on learning. An *initiated* disciple should be fully committed to learning and to applying what is learned. Some individuals who consider themselves to be disciples are not as committed as they should (and could) be. Their mental states are superficial and their behaviors are determined by whims rather than conscious intention. My guru asked disciples to be "one hundred percent" devoted to the kriya path. Not all of them were thus committed; those who were fully dedicated experienced rapid progress on the spiritual path. Some "truth seekers" are reluctant to make a commitment because they are afraid that they may have to change some of their mental attitudes and behaviors—which they will, if they are to be successful in their spiritual growth endeavors. Learning what not to do is just as important as learning what must be done, and doing it. The purpose of discipleship is not merely to be able to enjoy an improved human condition, it is to awaken to Self- and God-realization

and liberation of consciousness.

Discipleship is easy for one who is firmly resolved. It can be difficult for one who is not yet emotionally mature. A sincere disciple must be willing to discard erroneous ideas, illusions, and nonuseful desires and behaviors.

Of the various obstacles to spiritual growth, what is one of the major obstacles to overcome?

Complacency—because of disinterest in spiritual growth or an inclination (or personal choice) to identify with ordinary human conditions. Replace complacency with curiosity about higher realities, aspiration to actualize your innate potential, and unwavering Self-knowledge-based-confidence that will enable you to know all you can know and be all you can be. For everyone who is highly motivated the possibilities for learning and awakening are limitless. Actively participate in the drama of life rather than be satisfied with ordinary circumstances.

When meditating and settled in a thought-free state, what else should I do?

1. Just be there, aware and observant. Allow your innate urge to be fully awake to determine what occurs.
2. Gently aspire to realize (directly know and experience) your true Self as it is and the reality of pure Consciousness.

I am not as attentive to my personal duties and spiritual practices as I would like to be because I am often concerned about terrorism threats and other news which is unpleasant. What is the best way to think about, and relate to, world conditions?

As one of the more than six billion people in the world, it is unlikely that you will be personally harmed by events that you read or hear about. You may experience some temporary effects of fluctuating economic conditions that reflect the moods and behaviors of others. When meditating, direct all of your atten-

tion to your practice. When not meditating, nurture Self- and God-awareness. Remember: because you now abide in God, all is well with you.

When I sit to meditate, I am sometimes able to immediately be in a calm, concentrated state. Should a meditation technique be practiced then, or later?

When you immediately experience a calm, concentrated meditative state, let it persist. Use a meditation technique to improve your concentration when necessary. Practice kriya pranayama before concluding the meditation session. Even if kriya pranayama is not needed to accomplish a calm state, use it to enliven the chakras and brain and to encourage your life forces to flow freely.

Although I am regular in my spiritual practices, I feel that I am far from my goal of Self-realization. What should I do?

Analyze your concept of *time*. Think of it as a field, like space, in which events occur. At the innermost level of your being, you are knowledgeable and free; gently acknowledge this as being true for you and be more aware of the essence of your being. What you desire to realize in the future already exits, to be acknowledged and actualized now.

I still have a few minor habits (consuming too much sugar is one) that I know are not constructive. What is the best way to overcome them?

Replace them with good habits. Don't be overly concerned about minor things. Be more purposeful; concentrate on what is important; ignore what is not important. Cultivate a more cosmic conscious outlook.

I would like to do something to assist others to well-being and spiritual growth, but do not know how to do this. What can I do

that will be helpful?

Nurture your own well-being and spiritual growth. Your Self-realization and clarified awareness will then blend with the collective consciousness of everyone on the planet—and in other realms—and beneficially influence it. When you know of someone who is interested in spiritual well-being, give them helpful literature. If they are sincere, they will respond. You can request free copies of *Truth Journal* magazine and our booklets (*An Easy Guide to Meditation*, *How You Can Use Creative Imagination*, *How to Live Consciously in God*, and *The Philosophy and Practices of Kriya Yoga*) for this purpose. Invite spiritually inclined friends to our seminars and retreats.

When I think about God and the categories and processes of cosmic manifestation I seem to have some insight but complete comprehension is lacking.

Complete comprehension will be had when your innate knowledge of these matters fully emerges. Until then, persist in your endeavors to comprehend. As you become spiritually aware, knowledge will spontaneously emerge. Remember the words of Lahiri Mahasaya to his disciples: "Striving, striving, until one day, behold!, the divine goal is attained!"

Meditation results in divine revelation. Then, from the reality of our being arises the perception and realization of the pure Self. Self-realization is conscious cognition of our absolute identity with God, the self-revelation of our true nature by the illumination of our pure consciousness. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

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In the U.K., e-mail: richardfish@lineone.net

Munich: Friday Evening – Sunday Noon, May 2 – 4.
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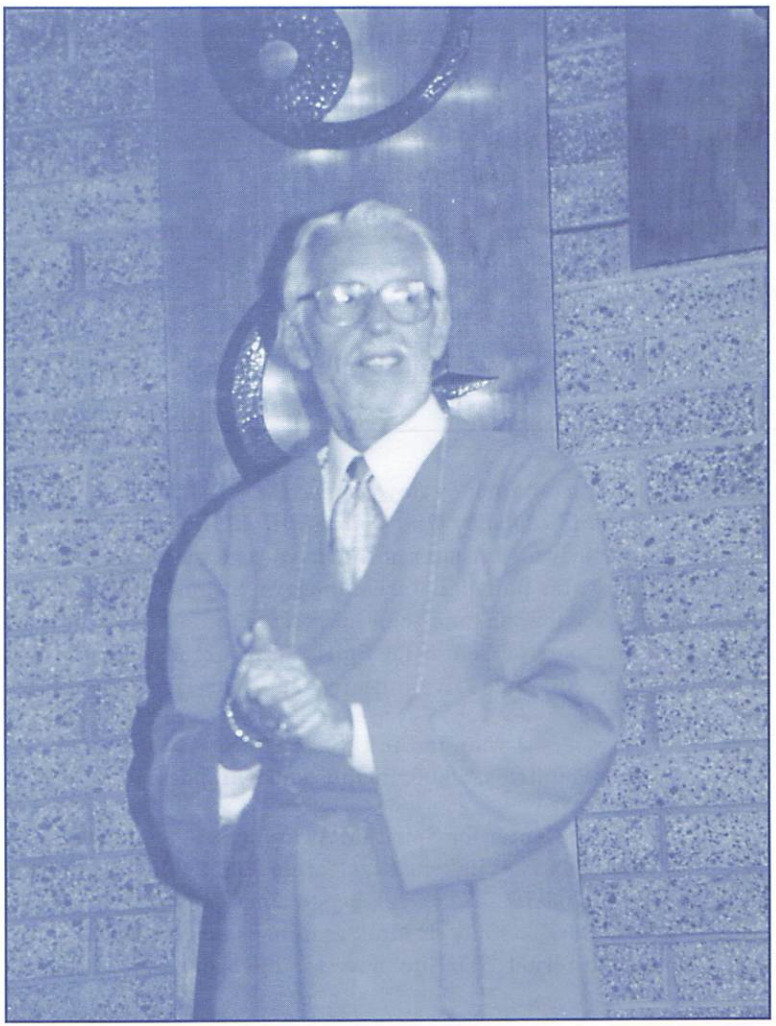

Roy Eugene Davis during a kriya initiation service
at Center for Spiritual Enlightenment, San Jose, Calif.
March 22, 2003

Having controlled the sense urges, the devotee should remain firm in yoga [superconscious meditative contemplation], intent on that supreme Reality. For one whose senses are mastered, intelligence [apprehension of higher knowledge] is firmly established. – *Bhagavad Gita 2:61*

When the purity of individualized awareness is the same as the purity of the Self, absolute liberation of consciousness is realized.

– *Patanjali's yoga-sutras 3:56*

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Written by Roy Eugene Davis
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Use Other Side if Necessary

The Ultimate Purpose of Spiritual Practice

ultimate Latin *ultimātus*, past participle of *ultimāre*, to come to an end. Representing the farthest possible extent. Utmost. Final.

We should be ever mindful that our metaphysical studies and spiritual practices should result in complete liberation (purity and clarity) of our consciousness.

We are liberated when:

- All false beliefs are absent.
- Our powers of perception are flawless.
- All troublesome subconscious and unconscious influences have been neutralized or transcended.
- The gunas (constituent attributes of nature) can no longer modify our awareness.

Even when we are Self- and God-realized, karmic influences may prevail and our awareness may be somewhat modified by the actions of the gunas. Sattwic influences may contribute to feelings of lightness and clarity of awareness; rajasic influences may cause restlessness; tamasic influences may contribute to mental dullness or blurred awareness. Genetic conditions and characteristics of our mind-body constitution may still be influential while we are embodied even though our mind is illumined and our consciousness is liberated. This is why some spiritually enlightened people may experience occasional physical problems.

Whenever I was with Paramahansa Yogananda, he always reminded me of the importance of maintaining my aspiration to be Self- and God-realized and to persist until liberation of my consciousness was complete and permanent. Much of what he referred to as his "quantity work" was directed to thousands of persons who needed to be taught and encouraged to live more

effectively. What he referred to as his "quality work" was his personal interaction with individuals who were more focused, and one hundred percent devoted to their kriya yoga practices for the purpose of awakening to liberation of consciousness.

Several years ago, a person said to me, "How can anyone be one hundred percent devoted to liberation of consciousness when they also have family and work obligations? Isn't that expecting too much of a kriya yoga initiate?"

This kriya yoga tradition is for everyone—for the devoted practitioner who has family and work obligations as well as for those who do not. All that is required is that one meditate regularly (and correctly), acquire higher knowledge by study and reflection, and fulfill personal duties skillfully.

Even in the [secular] world, the yogi who faithfully attends to duties and responsibilities without personal motive or attachment treads the sure path of enlightenment. – *Mahavatar Babaji*

"Without personal motive or attachment" means without ego-motivation. By living like this, karma accumulated in the past is exhausted and no new karma is accumulated.

Aspiration to be spiritually enlightened should be fervent and unwavering, balanced with patience. You cannot fail to awaken to Self- and God-realization. Whether you awaken to this stage sooner, or later, will be determined by your right endeavors to remove existing mental and physical obstacles to spiritual growth and your ability to transcend them.

You already have the capacity to be fully enlightened. All that is needed is your own participation in the awakening process. Aspire to liberation of consciousness.

When rested by kriya [pranayama] practice, the nervous system is refreshed. – *Swami Sri Yukteswar*

The Traditions, Philosophy & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Participate by sending your questions, inquiries, or comments to the CSA mailing address, or e-mail **csainc@csa-davis.org**

Is there a relationship between music and spiritual growth?

Inspirational singing, or chanting, can be helpful for the mood-elevation, improved devotion and concentration, and the enlivening of vital forces that can result. Chanting has been found to encourage harmonious interactions between the left and right hemispheres of the brain, reduce stress, and calm the mind and emotions. I presume that singing a pleasant song would have a similar effect.

I read in a book on psychic phenomena that before meditating one should mentally visualize being surrounded by an aura of light to be protected from possible negative influences. What about this?

There is no need to think of having to be protected from such influences. Self-aware, God-centered meditation practice is sufficient. Meditate *in* God.

In one of your books you wrote that the spiritual force that may be transmitted by the guru at the time of initiation may be withdrawn. For what reasons would this occur? If it does occur, would it be harmful to continue to practice what was taught?

The spiritual force is influential so long as it is nurtured. A guru doesn't withdraw it, but may withdraw attention from a disciple who chooses to no longer have a relationship with the guru. One can then, of course, continue spiritual practices and aspire to have an improved awareness of God.

When I meditate I hear sounds (like an ocean roar and bells ringing) in my ears. At times they seem to be surrounding me. They seem to disturb the silence I seek to experience. What can I do to have more peace and quiet when I meditate?

Either merge in the sound or learn to disregard it. You can experience deep peace with or without awareness of sounds.

Do angels exist? If they do, do they assist us?

The concept of angels ("messengers") as God's agents of revelation or as executors of divine will originated in Persia (now Iran). It was adopted by some Jewish thinkers and later by early Christians. The concept of "invisible helpers" is also found in the literature of other religious traditions. Many people say that their belief in angels provides them with a degree of peace of mind and explains why they sometimes experience a sense of guidance and even of being protected from harm. Belief, however, is not the same as knowledge.

You often say that we are spiritual beings and are meant to be problem-free. To me, being problem-free means perfect health, no money challenges, friends and associates who are behaving with courtesy and consideration, airplane flights that I take are always on time and comfortable, and so on. Do you mean that we are meant to be this problem-free, or that problems are to be viewed otherwise—such as challenges to be overcome or as learning experiences?

Yes, the ideal is to not have any major problems. If they emerge we can solve, see through, or rise above them.

What is the difference between awareness and consciousness?

Consciousness is usually defined as the totality of beliefs, opinions, and mental attitudes of a person or a group. Also, one's sense of self-identity. Being aware and being conscious mean the

same. As a metaphysical term, when spelled with an upper case C, the word Consciousness is used to refer to the one, supreme Being or Reality that is itself conscious.

I would like to know the relationship between psychological transformation and growing to emotional maturity?

Psychological transformation should result in the removal of conflicts and mental and emotional blockages, and orderly growth that culminates in emotional maturity. Emotional maturity along with rational thinking provides a firm foundation for spiritual growth. The spiritual growth of some people is inhibited by their emotional immaturity which contributes to irresponsible behaviors and a tendency to cling to superstitious or erroneous beliefs about God. People who are emotionally immature may dramatize infantile (childish) attitudes and behaviors.

When one has free time on a weekend, with no work, chores, or other obligations, what is a spiritually useful way to use it?

Enjoy your free time. Be happy. Rest and meditate more. Read useful literature. Make notes in your personal journal. Write your activity plans for the following week. Commune with nature. Nurture wholesome relationships.

How can we learn to sleep superconsciously?

Cultivating superconscious sleep is usually more effective when practiced when we are not too tired or sleepy. Here is one method: Lie on your back, relax, breathe evenly, and drift into a meditative state. Put your attention at the spiritual eye. Mentally chant "Om" at the base chakra, then ascend through the chakras to the spiritual eye, mentally chanting "Om" at each chakra, then to the crown chakra. Pause for a moment, then go down through the chakras, mentally chanting "Om" at each one. Do this a few times. The last time you do it, go down to the heart

chakra and maintain awareness from there to the crown chakra. Rest in that calm, relaxed, aware state. Whenever you prepare to sleep, assume that state and go to sleep. When awake, train yourself to be alert, attentive, and observant. In time, superconscious awareness will always be your normal state.

Do spiritually enlightened people know everything? Are their opinions ever wrong? Do they ever make mistakes?

They have Self- and God-knowledge. They may not know all there is to know about relative events and circumstances unless they direct their attention to them. If they are not well-informed, their opinions may not be any more accurate than the opinions of others and their decisions and actions may not be flawless. Stories are sometimes told about "saints" who are fluent in any language and who "know everything." I have not met such a person, nor have I been provided with any reliable evidence to support such claims.

I am strongly inclined to be devotional. I like ritual and enjoy devotional chanting. Is this a suitable enlightenment path?

Performance of a ritual and devotional chanting can help to focus concentration and elicit a sense of awareness of God. It will be useful to balance your devotional inclination with intellectual inquiry, just as it is useful for individuals who are intellectually inclined to cultivate devotion. Being devotional doesn't mean that we shouldn't use common sense.

Paramahansa Yogananda had a devotional temperament. Sri Yukteswar was strongly intellectual. Paramahansaji once said that although his early relationship with Sri Yukteswar challenged him, he needed his guru's influence to balance his devotional nature and prepare him for his life's mission.

When I practice kriya pranayama, I sometimes feel a surge of current in my spine and at other times it doesn't flow so well. How can I improve my kriya pranayama practice?

Improve your awareness of your spine. When practicing kriya pranayama, relate the "suction" sensation in the throat to your spine and "feel" the current coming up as you breathe in. "Feel" a soothing sensation as the current flows down with exhalation. Experiment until you actually feel the current of life force circulating. Practice with intention.

It may also be helpful to practice hatha yoga routines that directly affect the spine: the shoulder stand, forward bending, and half-spinal twist. Practice of uddiyana bandha can be helpful in enlivening the solar plexus and awakening dormant energies in the lower chakras. Mahamudra practice is also helpful.

Is having a romantic relationship compatible with kriya yoga practice and endeavor to grow spiritually?

It is natural to have and to enjoy a compatible, romantic relationship. An incompatible romantic relationship can cause mental and emotional disturbance, waste energies and other personal resources, and distract attention from matters which are important. If you have a wholesome, compatible, romantic relationship, nurture it while being attentive to your other duties and spiritual practices.

Are there any special foods that one who is intent on spiritual growth should eat?

A balanced diet of nutritious foods is recommended. Eat in moderation, sufficient for your needs. Avoid overly processed foods, especially those with chemical additives and colorings. According to Ayurvedic theory, yogis should include a modest portion of sweet foods which are nourishing—not sugar, but foods that have a sweet after-digestive influence. Such food usually tastes sweet when chewed. Maintain your ideal body weight. Experiment until you find the food combinations most useful for you.

Note: Refer to my book *An Easy Guide to Ayurveda.*

I would like to more clearly understand the meanings of these Sanskrit words.

Definitions of the words you provided:

Nirguna Brahman Absolute (pure) supreme Consciousness.
Saguna Brahman Modified supreme Consciousness, with attributes.
Purusha The Yoga and Samkhya term for the transcendental Self, Atman. The word is sometimes used to refer to individualized units (atman). Thus purusha, individualized atman, in contrast to Purusha as Paramatman (*para*, beyond), transcendental Self.
prakriti Nature, including primordial nature and nature that is objectively manifested.
jiva The individualized Self, usually considered as a soul, a Self identified with self-sense, ego, intelligence, and mind.
ajna chakra Ajna means "command." The spiritual eye chakra related to the front lobes of the brain associated with concentrated power of will or directed intention.
Ishwara (as in Ishwara pranidhana) Foremost ruler or "lord." The aspect of supreme Consciousness that regulates cosmic processes. In Patanjali's yoga-sutras (2:1) *Ishwara pranidhana* (devotional surrender) is often translated as "devotion to God." The highest form of devotion is to surrender *in* God, to renounce (let go of or cast off) the illusional sense of self (ego) to allow Self- and God-realization to be spontaneously actualized.

Swami Sri Yukteswar's monastic name is composed of *yuk*, union, and Ishwara: "united with God."

Meditation techniques: mantra, kriya pranayama, jyoti mudra, mental chanting at the chakras, and others. What is the most useful sequence in which to practice them?

Practice kriya pranayama and jyoti mudra once or twice a day. Meditate in the deep silence after using each technique, with your attention and awareness focused in the spiritual eye and crown chakra. If meditating longer, when you notice that you are too passive or inattentive, use a mantra or chant "Om" through

the chakras and again sit in the deep silence.

Another supplemental technique: Centered in the heart chakra (or spiritual eye and heart chakra), feel yourself to be a bubble of joy. As a bubble of joy, expand your awareness beyond the boundaries of your body. Continue to expand until you feel that you are merged with the cosmic ocean of bliss. Imagine yourself doing this, then go beyond imagining to clear awareness that you *are* cosmic bliss.

Bliss is pure, spiritual, ecstatic joy rather than an emotion.

Conclude meditation practice by sharing your peace and clear awareness with all souls, everywhere:

- Established in Self- and God-awareness, include all space, all realms, and all souls in your awareness. Imagine that you are omnipresent one with everything.
- Share feeling-awareness of love and good will. Wish for all souls to be happy, fulfilled, and spiritually enlightened.
- Continue for several minutes until you feel that God alone is real and that all is well.

To do this with more concentrated intention, imagine that you are in infinite space with trillions of souls. Mentally say:

> Hello everyone! This is (speak your name). I am sharing my love and good will with you! I see you awake in God, whole, happy, and spiritually enlightened?

Note: This practical way of demonstrating compassion was used, and recommended, by Paramahansa Yogananda.

When you are not meditating, when you think of someone (or everyone) immediately acknowledge their divine nature. See beyond outer appearances and conditions. There is no need to be concerned about the results of your spiritual work for others. Selflessly knowing and seeing the highest good for others also benefits you. In time, you will be so established in this practice

that your awareness of the reality of God will be permanent. When someone in need communicates with you, or even thinks about you, they will be blessed by your God-consciousness.

I am intent on spiritual growth, but I don't want to become too "other-worldly" or impractical. What do you recommend?

Avoid preoccupation with metaphysical speculation to the extent that you are inclined to be disinterested in relating to, and effectively functioning in, the physical world. Use your improved understanding to skillfully attend to your duties and achieve your worthy goals. Think rationally, be decisive, and enjoy what you do. I often heard Paramahansa Yogananda say, "When you know God, life is fun."

Some indications that you are progressing on your spiritual path are: needs are more easily provided for; desires are more easily fulfilled; comprehension of metaphysical principles improves; and awareness of the wholeness of life is more vivid.

There is only one realm: the realm of God with a variety of categories, including the physical universe—our current abode. The allness of God can be realized while we are here. Although the physical universe is not our final destination, understanding higher realities makes living in this world easier and more enjoyable. Consider Self- and God-conscious, practical living as useful training and preparation for what is yet to be accomplished.

When meditating, I don't have exceptional perceptions or feel that I am Self- or God-aware. How can I improve my practice?

Practice the kriya meditation techniques, then sit and wait, with your attention and awareness in the spiritual eye and the crown chakra. Aspire to be aware without trying to cause anything to occur. Feel that you are meditating *in* God.

At other times, cultivate an alert, attentive mental attitude and peacefully attend to your duties and relationships. Your endeavor to maintain a clear state of awareness when you are not

meditating is just as important as meditation practice.

I had painful, frustrating experiences during my childhood and early adult years, and a few traumatic experiences (divorce, job loss, disappointments in relationships) since then. My sense of self-worth is weak and feelings of resentment often come to the surface. How can I overcome the effects of past events?

There is no person who has not experienced pain of some kind. How we choose to deal with memories that elicit feelings of discomfort is our responsibility. First, remind yourself that you are a spiritual being. If others knowingly or unknowingly hurt you, forgive them. If you knowingly or unknowingly hurt others or yourself, or made mistakes, forgive yourself.

Affirm with conviction: "Today is the most important day of my immortal life." Then, move forward with strong resolve to accomplish what you think and feel to be most worthwhile.

Your constructive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors will neutralize the pain that you experienced, elicit feelings (along with knowledge) of Self-worth, and inspire and motivate you to enjoy your happy, healthy, successful life. The full reality of God is around, and within, you now.

NEWS

The private retreats described on the facing page are ideal for kriya initiates. Reserve your participation early.

If you haven't requested your copy of *Satisfying Our Innate Desire [To Know God]*, use the enclosed response form. The first printing of this book is 20,000 copies.

If you have kriya initiate friends who do not know about CSA, request free copies of *Radiance* and give them a sample copy.

September: I will present these meditation seminars in Canada.

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City Hall (Main Floor)
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Kriya yoga initiation will be offered after the seminar.
For reservations contact:
Yoga Association of Alberta. E-mail: yaa@yoga.ca

Vancouver, B.C. (Richmond): Monday, September 8
7 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Best Western Abercorn Inn
9260 Bridgeport Road

Reservations: Ernest Wenzel (604) 462-0684
e-mail: wenzel@smartt.com

Northern California: If you received kriya yoga initiation from me at Center for Spiritual Enlightenment in San Jose and are a member of CSE, inform the CSE office so they can put you on their kriya initiate mailing list.

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[To Know God]

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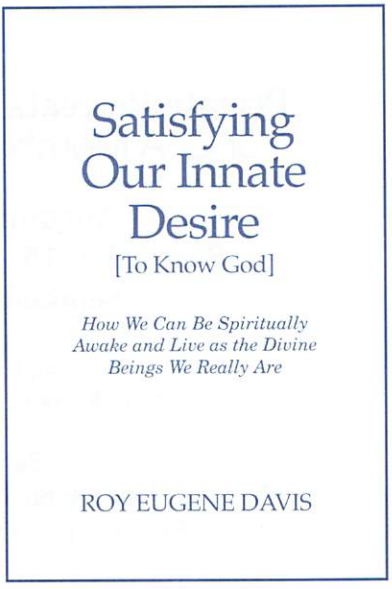

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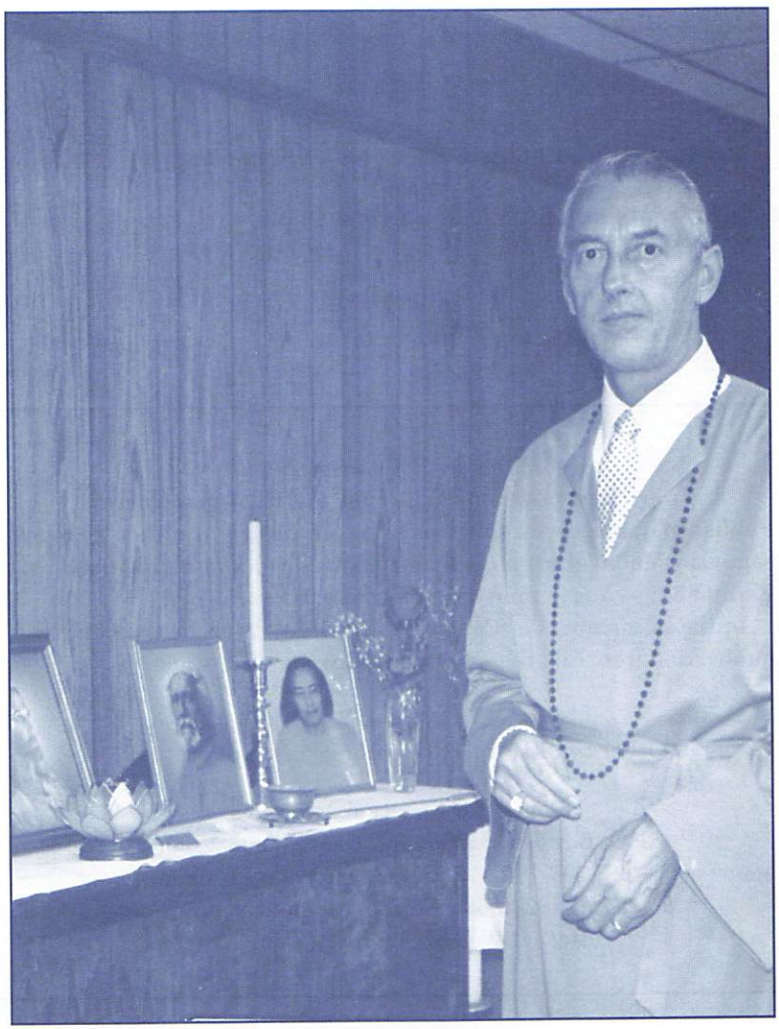

The [true] Self is never born, nor does it ever die ... the [true] Self is indestructible, permanent, eternal. – *Bhagavad Gita 2:20*

God is revealed within us when our awareness is made pure by liberating it from all concepts of duality and finitude. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

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Meditating In Om

The evidential aspect of God is Om [the vibration of the power of supreme Consciousness]. Meditation on Om results in knowledge of its meaning and in Self- and God-realization.

– *Patanjali's yoga-sutras 1:27,28*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. – *The Gospel of John 1:1*

In the *Mandukya Upanishad,* Om written in Sanskrit as AUM is described as having four parts: *a*, *u*, *m*, and a dot above the letter *m* used to indicate a nasal humming sound when Om is audibly chanted. These four parts are related to four states of consciousness: waking, dreaming sleep, deep sleep, and the transcendental (superconscious) state of Self-awareness.

Although audible and mental chanting of Om are useful, hearing Om while meditating is more useful. The progressive stages of practice can be:

- With attention and awareness anchored in the spiritual eye and crown chakra, listen in the ears to hear subtle sounds behind the ringing sounds that may be present. Continue to listen until the sound that is heard is constant. Consider that sound to be an aspect of the Om vibration.
- Merge your attention and awareness in the sound until you are aware of being one with it.
- With awareness in the crown chakra, direct attention to the source from which Om emanates until you are established in pure, existence-being.

When meditating in Om, remain alert, yet surrendered. Avoid impatient, effort-driven concentration. Sit until your mind is calm and meditation flows spontaneously.

Om, the vibrating power of supreme Consciousness, flows from the Oversoul aspect of Consciousness. Its self-produced aspects of space, time, and cosmic forces comprise the field of primordial (original or first expression) of nature. Because it is all-pervading, it can be readily discerned at any moment in time and at any location is space. Attentive contemplation of Om results in comprehension of it, its characteristic aspects, and its source. That is why meditation in Om is said to be the direct way to Self- and God-knowledge.

If preliminary meditation techniques are used (recitation of a mantra, prayer, pranayama, or concentration on a chosen form or aspect of ultimate Reality) the final practice is to put attention in the crown chakra until awareness is established there. Om can then be contemplated with keen expectation, to comprehend what it is and its source.

Transcendental awareness can be realized (experienced and known). Because it is devoid of modifying characteristics, it cannot be fully described. It is formless.

When meditating in Om, transitory, subjective perceptions of visions or sounds (other than Om) should be ignored. They are symptoms of mental and emotional unrest. When the mind is calm, absolute silence and awareness of pure being will prevail.

Putting Desires and Intentions in Om to Have Them More Easily Fulfilled

After meditating in Om, when conviction that your desires and intentions in regard to your total well-being and spiritual growth will be fulfilled is established, supportive events will spontaneously occur to make possible their fulfillment.

When your awareness is merged in Om, a mere impulse of desire or intention is sufficient to cause predictable effects. Working at this level of awareness and understanding is more subtle, and more reliable, than attempting to pray for results or using affirmations. When praying for results, we may have difficulty

in believing that our prayers will be effective. When using an affirmation, we may have difficulty in assuming and maintaining a conviction that what we affirm is real. When we are established in Self-knowledge and identified with Om, we are at the level from which objective phenomena originates. Here, we are established in awareness of the wholeness of which relative events and things are parts or aspects.

To have wholesome desires and intentions easily fulfilled, Paramahansa Yogananda advised his disciples to merge their awareness in Om and "float" their desires and intentions in it. When doing this, avoid willfulness, and inclinations to attempt to force anything to happen. While one with Om, release your desires and intentions into it and it will provide the support and good fortune that you need and deserve.

It may be that creative ideas arise in your mind or that you are impelled to perform useful actions. Act on your creative ideas and perform useful actions when you can. When you do not know what to do to help yourself, stay anchored in Self-knowledge and the Om vibration. Welcome the good fortune that is freely provided for you. Be thankful that you know how to live from your innermost level of being.

Acknowledge This About Your Self

I am a fully awake, vital, immortal spiritual being.

Note: Review the philosophical concepts, lifestyle guidelines, and meditation practices and routines described in *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living* and *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*. Regularly read a few verses in *The Bhagavad Gita* and the *yoga-sutras*.

The Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Your questions, inquiries, and comments are requested for possible inclusion in our ongoing dialogue. Use the enclosed response form or e-mail: csainc@csa-davis.org

You have suggested not to mix kriya yoga practices with those of other traditions. Please provide examples.

One can, of course, observe traditional religious practices: Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, or others. It is not useful to mix kriya meditation practices with those of traditions or systems which do not have the same ideals and purposes. Most "new age" practices (hypnosis, channeling, fascination with auras, and "quick enlightenment" programs) should be avoided, as well as any other involvement which distracts us from our major purposes or causes mental confusion.

How can I develop confidence and passion for living a healthy and fulfilled life and teaching kriya yoga worldwide?

Decide to be healthy and successful and do what is necessary to actualize your ideals. Teaching kriya yoga: 1) prepare by right living, study, and spiritual practice; 2) be certain that you are "called" to teach, rather than only have desire to teach. Ask your guru (teacher) if you are destined to represent this work. If you are, when you are fully prepared and qualified, do it skillfully and selflessly.

I sometimes start long conversations with people to explain the viewpoints of our path. Is this useful, or should I avoid talking about such matters?

It is best to avoid conversations (short or long) with others who are not receptive to our ideas. Give receptive persons infor-

mative literature to read. Don't try to persuade others to accept your views. The most useful way to help others is to be centered in Self- and God-awareness.

I heard about a technique (kechari mudra) practiced along with higher kriya meditation techniques. What about this?

Kechari means being "free in space" when awareness is no longer confined by ego-sense. Some yoga teachers use this word to refer to rolling the tip of the tongue back toward the throat, when meditating, in an endeavor to elicit relaxation and mental calmness. Some practitioners of kriya pranayama say that doing this helps them to feel life force moving in the spine to the spiritual eye and crown chakra. Others say it distracts them. I have known several people who practiced this procedure who have not been successful in experiencing refined superconscious states. It is more important to calm the mind and clarify awareness.

The human population has increased during the past several centuries. How is this possible if only a specific number of souls were originally created?

Because units of pure consciousness are constantly being individualized, there is no limit to the number of souls that can be involved with cosmic processes. Souls may express in an almost pure realm that is beyond the field of primordial nature, in the field of primordial nature, or in causal, astral, or physical realms—including, perhaps, other planets in our galaxy and other galaxies.

Yoga practice is said to result in health and vitality. Why is it that some yogis die at an early age—fifties or sixties—instead of living to one hundred or more?

Some yogis leave their bodies when they decide that their mission in this realm has been completed. Others may still be influenced by subconscious tendencies or by inherited character-

istics that cause their early departure. Some yogis were not as attentive to their health and well-being as they should have been.

Explain more about the avatar concept. What does it mean to be an avatar? Are there any avatars presently on our planet?

An avatar is often defined as a "divine incarnation" or a full, unrestricted manifestation of God in human form. I am not aware of any such incarnations. An objective examination of the lives of persons who have been referred to as avatars in this sense reveals that they often experienced hardship and a variety of limitations before awakening to Self-realization. If the fullness of God actually incarnated, the event would be so dramatic that there could be no doubt about the matter.

It is common for devotees of a saintly person to refer to that person as an avatar because they 1) believe it; 2) want to believe it; 3) mean that person had (or has) qualities or abilities that are exceptional in comparison to people whose awareness and abilities are ordinary.

One has only to visit a place where a presumed avatar resides to see that conditions there are not always harmonious and that people who are there are not always healthy-minded or rational. If God were actually present with unrestricted knowledge and powers, everything and everyone in relationship to "God" would be immediately transformed and everyone in our present era would be almost fully enlightened.

Is it necessary to experience a "breathless state" to experience samadhi?

When breathing is very slow and shallow, mental states and states of awareness are inclined to be calm and it may then be easier to experience a superconscious state if one is inclined to do so. The breathing pattern of some meditators is slow and shallow when they are in a subconscious state. To be superconscious, it is not necessary for breathing to stop.

Superconsciousness is experienced when awareness is clear. Early superconscious states may be mixed with thoughts and emotions. When thoughts cease, fluctuations in awareness do not occur, and we are alert, superconsciousness is flawless.

There are gaps (spaces) between thoughts that occur in the mind and changes that occur in awareness. Look for these empty spaces and become familiar with how it is like when thoughts and changes in awareness no longer distract your attention or modify your awareness. With practice, you will be able to assume a thought-free state of clear awareness at will. If thoughts persist when you meditate, you can disregard them. When engaged in ordinary activities you can be Self-aware while thinking and acting.

When asked to describe "kriya yoga," what should I say?

Explain that the Sanskrit word *kriya* means "action" and that *kriyas* are intentional, constructive actions. Yoga means to be aware of being one with the Infinite. Kriya yoga practice includes mental, moral, and physical discipline as may be required; study of higher realities; and purification of ego consciousness in order to be Self- and God-aware. If we do not use Sanskrit words, this way of life can be viewed as a natural way to facilitate (make easier) our spiritual growth. It is, therefore, for everyone, everywhere, regardless of their personal history or cultural circumstances.

What does it mean to be "enlightened"?

To be enlightened about something is to have knowledge of it. When we are fully, spiritually enlightened we will have complete knowledge of the one Consciousness and all of its characteristics and processes.

When meditating in a superconscious state, can environmental sounds still be heard?

If attention is internalized, external sounds are not heard because attention is removed from them. If sitting to be aware and passively ignoring the thoughts or feelings that arise, environmental sounds may be heard but will not distract attention or cause a response in the nervous system or mind. This has been verified by using instruments to record brain waves.

I am sometimes so outwardly directed that I forget to be Self- and God-aware and am also inclined to neglect my meditation practices and metaphysical studies.

Train yourself to be Self- and God-aware at all times. You can do it with patient practice. To avoid neglecting studies and meditation practice, decide on a specific time when you will do these things, and do them. Mastery of attention is one of the keys to effective living and spiritual growth. Spiritual mastery is accomplished by being able to immediately assume a state of superconsciousness at will, by mere intention.

My personal life, work, and activities are satisfying, yet I don't have a clear sense of meaningful purpose.

Your primary purpose should be to awaken to Self- and God-realization in your present incarnation. Other purposes should, when accomplished, produce constructive results that are supportive of you and others who are influenced by them. Besides nurturing your spiritual awakening, living an honest, useful life is very meaningful (of great value).

Is it true that some spiritually enlightened individuals can travel to distant places in a subtle body or appear in dreams of their disciples to provide help or instruction?

While travel in a subtle body may (rarely) occur, it is not nec-

essary. A spiritually enlightened person need not go anywhere to assist others because it is known that the wholeness of the one Consciousness includes everything within itself. The concept of distance exists only when our awareness is ordinary.

Although mental or spiritual attunement with a another person may cause us to dream about them and even consider the dream to be of value, the idea that spiritual teachers can at will appear in someone's dream is greatly exaggerated.

Several years ago I learned of a debate between "gurus" of a certain tradition in regard to these subjects. One of them said that reports of his dream-appearances were the result of the wishful thinking of those who claimed such experiences. A senior member of the tradition said, "Why not allow them to believe it if it improves their faith and seems to help them?" The obvious reason why the truth should be told is that false beliefs keep the ego confined and encourage fantasy.

I have had occasional, vivid dreams in which one of more of the gurus in our kriya tradition were present. While such dreams are enjoyable, I acknowledge them as creations of my subconscious mind.

I am interested in knowing about higher realities and being Self-realized, yet I have some personal problems to solve and have needs that are not yet fulfilled.

Knowledge of God, your true nature as a spiritual being, and the laws of cause and effect should enable you to solve your problems and have your needs fulfilled. Examine your mental attitudes, modes of thinking, and behaviors and notice the relationship between them and your experiences.

Although I am devoted to the kriya yoga way of living, I am not comfortable with organizational affiliation, not even with those which promulgate these teachings.

Discover the reason for your reluctance to be affiliated. Is it

because you:

a. Prefer not to be involved with some of the members of the organization?
b. Don't agree with some of the purposes of the organization?
c. Don't want to offer your skills or provide money or other resources to assist with the organization's endeavors?
d. Other: _____

After Paramahansaji had been with his guru for a while, Sri Yukteswar, noticing his aversion to organizational work, said, "Where would you be today if others had not generously provided you with useful knowledge and encouragement?"

Wisely planned and implemented organized endeavors are not only of value, they are necessary.

If you prefer not to have to interact with some members of a useful organized endeavor, avoid them.

If you don't agree with the purposes or the endeavors of an organization, ignore it.

If you are reluctant to offer your skills, money, or other resources to a useful organized endeavor, get through, or rise above, that attitude and do something useful to assist it. Your participation will allow you to be a vital part of a worthwhile activity larger than your own personal interests. Whatever you do that is helpful, do it thoughtfully and selflessly while not neglecting your duties and spiritual practices.

If perfecting the yamas and niyamas is important for disciples on this kriya yoga path, I am not doing so well in this regard. I cannot always control my thoughts and emotions, nor is my lifestyle well-organized.

In chapter two of the yoga-sutras, yamas are restraints, the behaviors we should avoid: thoughts and actions which injure; untruthfulness; taking what is not ours; wasting vital forces; and hoarding unnecessary material things. Niyamas are the things

we should do: keep our body, mind, and environment clean; cultivate soul contentment in all circumstances; control thoughts, emotions, actions, negative impulses that arise, and the senses; study to acquire knowledge of higher realities; and confirm our devotion to the spiritual path by purifying the ego and discerning it for what it is—an illusion caused by our misperception of our essence of being.

I doubt that anyone who is not fully spiritually awake is able to flawlessly adhere to these guidelines. You can only do the best that you are capable of doing at your stage of spiritual awareness. As you do your best, and continue to study and meditate, as you become more spiritually aware you will be able to actualize all of these ideals. In the meantime, don't despair. Don't stop trying. Persist with high resolve. Patiently endeavor to replace nonuseful mental attitudes, moods, and behaviors with those which are more life-enhancing.

If the universe had a beginning and will eventually cease to exist, what is the purpose of our being here?

Some spiritually enlightened people say that the universe provides a variety of opportunities for life to express and for souls to actualize their innate potential. Some materialistic people who do not apprehend higher realties say that human beings are accidents of evolution, that we are here to serve its unintelligently directed impulses. When we know that we are spiritual beings and know that the universe exists because of interactions of cosmic forces, we can also know that when a physical universe dissolves (after trillions of solar years), its component aspects (space, time, and cosmic forces) will still exist in the field of primordial nature from which it was first emanated and by which it was sustained. After a duration of rest, a universe is again sent forth into manifestation and life is eventually able to be expressive in it. The manifestation, evolution, and dissolution of universes are periodic events.

I sometimes wonder if I will ever be spiritually enlightened.

Your comment reminds me of a brother disciple I knew many years ago who, although his devotion was sincere and fervent, could not (or would not) control his behaviors.

When a disciple asked Paramahansaji about him, our guru said, " I once prayed to know his future and was "told" that he would be liberated in this incarnation."

The person who was inquiring said, "I don't know how that can be possible."

Paramahansaji chuckled, then replied, "I don't either, but that is what I was told, so it must be true."

You will certainly be spiritually enlightened because it is your destiny to be fully awake in God.

I am having difficulty cultivating soul contentment because I worry a lot about my future. I am almost sixty years of age and life seems to be moving fast and leaving me behind.

Regardless of your circumstances, present or future, the cultivation of soul contentment will enable you to effectively and appropriately relate to them. Events, circumstances, and relationships have beginning and endings. You are endless.

If you desire something with concentrated intention, the universe will manifest it for you. – *Swami Sri Yukteswar*

Private Retreats At CSA Headquarters
For CSA Members and Kriya Initiates

Spring 2004 Schedule
May 3 – 7 May 10 – 14 May 17 – 21

Limited to 20 participants.
Stay for one, two, or three weeks.

Arrive Saturday or Sunday.
Private, Comfortable Guest House Rooms Provided
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- One Hour Meditation at 6 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Class on kriya yoga philosophy and practices at 7 a.m.
- Two hours of light work-service daily.
- Free time for rest, private study, and quiet reflection.
- Donation basis.
- Reservations required.
- Request travel directions if needed.

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Internet web site www.csa-davis.org

Regular summer retreat schedules open to everyone are published in *Truth Journal* and our newsletter.

Seminars with Roy Eugene Davis

Kriya initiation at these* locations.Reservations requested.

*Dallas–Ft. Worth (BEDFORD)
Saturday, October 18, 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Holiday Inn • 3005 West Airport Freeway (Bedford)
Exit Murphy Road off 183 West

Austin, Texas: Sunday, October 19, 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.
First Church of Religious Science
9003 Waterford Centre Blvd., Suite 110
Burnet Road and Hwy 183, in the Shopping Center
Reservations are not required for this program.

*Phoenix, Arizona: Sunday, March 14, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Holiday Inn • 4321 North Central Avenue

San Diego (MIRA MESA): California
Saturday, March 20, 10 am. – 1 p.m.
Holiday Inn • 9335 Kearny Mesa Rd.
From I-15: exit Miramar Rd. From I-805: exit La Jolla Village Dr./Miramar Road and continue east to Kearny Mesa Rd.

*Costa Mesa, Calif: Sunday, March 21, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Holiday Inn • 3131 South Bristol Street
One mile west of Orange County Airport.
Turn south on Bristol Street off Hwy 405, go two blocks.

*San Jose, Calif.: Sunday, March 28, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Center for Spiritual Enlightenment • 1146 University Ave.

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